

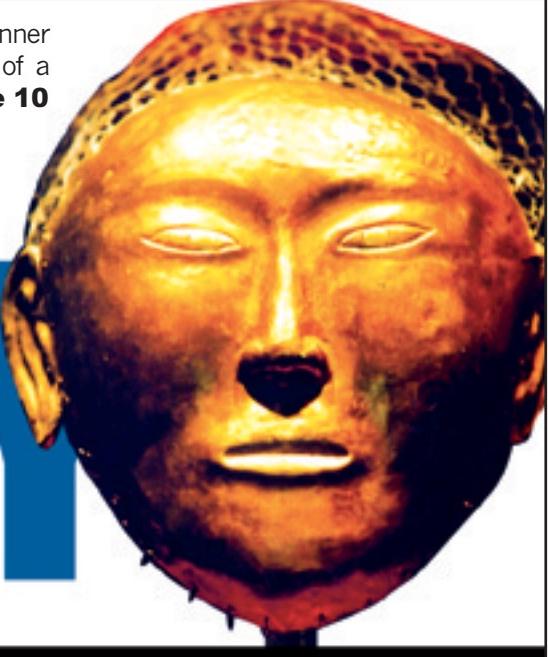
The hearing of China's largest ever share price manipulation case in China opened in Beijing this week. **Page 8**



The only graduate student among the locksmiths in Beijing, Wang Chi proves himself to be far more than just a street peddler. **Page 9**



Antiques unearthed in Inner Mongolia tell the grand story of a lost nationality. **Page 10**



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## World Cup Over — for China

By Chen Ying

China's first World Cup campaign ended yesterday afternoon after the team was defeated by Turkey 0:3. The players seemed nervous in their debut appearance in the World Cup. Chinese fans were disappointed after the 0:2 defeat by Costa Rica in the opening game on June 4. Then four days later, Brazil beat China 4:0.

Despite the team's failure to get through to the second round, China's head coach Bora Milutinovic still believes Chinese football has a bright future. "The small things make all the difference when you're in a World Cup for the first time. China has a real future. The Chinese players have learned a lot already." The team arrives back in Beijing about 11 am today.

Yang Chen comes agonizingly close to breaking China's goal drought, only to see the ball bounce off the post. Photo by Hu Jinxi

By Xiao Rong

Shan Tianfang never imagined that storytelling, the traditional folk art that has made him a household name throughout China, could land him in court.

The popular raconteur, along with Anshan Radio Station in Liaoning Province, lost a lawsuit recently, in which he was accused of infringing on the copyright of the book *Twelve Flying Darts*, written in 1938 by Gong Baiyu,

Gong Yiren and Gong Zhiyu, the children of the author and plaintiffs in the case, accused Shan of using part of the plot of their father's novel in a story broadcast on Anshan.

In the final judgement handed down by Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court last month, Shan was ordered to make a statement of apology to the plaintiffs for seven consecutive days during the storytelling program on Anshan. He was also ordered to pay 3,900 yuan in compensation. Anshan was fined 2,500 yuan.

### "I admit my mistake"

The 67-year-old Shan is frank in admitting his lack of familiarity with the concept of copyright protection. "I myself totally trust the court, and respect the final judgement," he said. "Since it was my fault, I am happy to confess my mistake and make appropriate compensation."

Shan told *Beijing Today*, however, that he was deeply troubled when first accused of infringing another author's copyright. The year 2000 seemed to be an unlucky one for him. He was hit with two lawsuits, one of which was later dropped, both over copyright infringements.

"Storytelling has long been a kind of oral literature, making wide use of source materials from folk arts. So it has always been an accepted practice for storytellers to use and adapt folk tales for our performance," he said.

Shan had no idea that the practice of revising and adapting stories, either from ancient times or by contemporary authors, might risk infringing someone's copyright. "I really learnt a lesson from this lawsuit, which urged me to familiarize myself with related laws on copyrights. Only in this way can I avoid making similar mistakes in future, and protect my own rights as well."

In fact there have been numerous cases when Shan's own copyrights have been infringed. Instead of taking legal action against such behavior, he said he would rather focus on his beloved career of storytelling.

Besides emphasizing the necessity of familiarizing himself with the relevant laws, Shan said ever since the lawsuit, he has tried to contact authors of those novels he wanted to adapt to the form of storytelling.

"To sign contracts with both the authors and the broadcasting stations is a good way for we storytellers to prevent similar disputes on copyrights," he added. "My company is now in partnership with over 400 radio stations nationwide, so it's necessary to use legal means to protect our own rights."

### Creation or adaptation?

Shan is not the only practitioner of traditional arts

## Folk Artists Ensnared in Copyright Cases

### Disputes Highlight Need for Folk Art Protection Legislation



Storyteller Shan Tianfang

Photo by Lily

### Copyright Disputes in Folk Arts

\* The earliest dispute begins in 1993 when renowned folk singer Wang Lubin is accused of plagiarizing folk songs of the western provinces.

\* Bai Xiue, a paper-cut artist

from Shanxi province sues the State Postal Bureau in 2001 for infringing on the copyright of a paper-cut work in the design of the stamp for the year of Snake.

\* Musician Ma Sicong is ac-

cused of using a Suiyuan folk song of Shaanxi Province in one of his compositions.

\* Composer Zhao Jiping is accused of copying a folk song of Shandong Province in his popular Brave Man Song in 2000.

cal melodies of the Hezhen, said Guo. Although the song is a folk rhyme, whether the local government or the research association has the right to represent the Hezhen as the plaintiff is not clear.

Guo even sang parts of *Wusuli Boatman's Song* to demonstrate its difference to the *Boatman's Song*. He also pointed out many other music works worldwide that are closely connected with folk arts.

"I'm totally confident I will win the lawsuit," said Guo. "It's necessary to establish relevant laws to protect the copyright of folk arts, but protection must be based on encouraging, not restricting innovation. Otherwise, no one would feel free to utilize the abundant folk art resources to create great art works."

### Legislation to Protect Folk Art Needed

The two lawsuits have attracted a great deal of attention, in both legal and arts circles. Wang Fanwu, vice director of the Intellectual Property Court of the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court, called for legislation on folk art protection to be accelerated.

"There has been no specific regulations regarding the protection of folk artwork in China's copyright law so far. What actually constitutes folk artworks, who can act as the owner of the folk artwork copyright, how long should folk artworks be protected, all these issues still need to be clarified," Wang said. "At present it's difficult for judges to resolve the specific copyright disputes regarding folk artworks that have been increasing in number in recent years."

Liu Xinwen, professor of the China University of Politics and Law, says there are three major differences between folk artworks and ordinary artworks in terms of copyright protection.

"According to the international definition, folk artworks are those group-created works that have been handed down from generation to generation and become part of the traditional cultural heritage of a nation. Secondly, creators of folk artworks cannot be

individually traced. Thirdly, due to the uncertainty as to the creators, appropriate adaptation of folk artworks is usually encouraged."

Another problem existing in the protection of folk artwork copyrights, is that of how to determine the holder of folk artwork copyright, according to Cui Guobin, a professor from the Intellectual Property College of Beijing University.

"In the case of the *Wusuli Boatman's Song*, there is no legal evidence up till now that any Hezhen minority residents, organizations or local government can act as the copyright owner of the folk song," he said. "But most legal experts tend to concede that governments can be the lawful owner of folk artwork copyright."

Comparing the two lawsuits, Wang Fanwu said the Shan Tianfang case was not a typical folk artworks copyright dispute, as the original author of the story could be determined.

"The Guo Song case, however, may prove to be a typical folk artwork copyright lawsuit, and the final judgment might set a precedent that could exert some influence on any future legislation concerning folk art copyright protection," he said.

Wang told *Beijing Today* that the Ministry of Culture and National Copyright Bureau are currently drafting laws to protect folk art.

"With the globalization of China's cultural exchanges, legislation is necessary to protect folk art copyright, so that the essence of our national culture will not be abused or pirated," Wang said.

He added that while the protection of folk arts is important, there should be a balance between protection and development. "After all, every one of us has the right to make full use of, and by doing so, revitalize, the abundant folk art resources of our country."

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

# Olympic Committee Highlights High-tech

**Science and Technology Committee of 2008 Olympics pushes for the adoption of cutting-edge technologies in nine major city projects**

By Xiao Rong

Nine key projects to facilitate the goal of a "High-tech Olympics" were announced last Friday at the official launch of the Science and Technology Committee of the 29th Beijing Olympic Games.

The committee, composed of representatives of 10 governmental departments and scientific research organizations, will act as a consulting organization for the

Organizing Committee, providing all-round technological advice.

The nine projects involve the Beijing Intelligent Transportation System, clean energy supply project, sandstorm prevention strategy, electric bus research, multi-lingual service networks, anti-drug inspection, information security, food safety and satellite technology.

The Olympic Village will be the first area of Beijing to ben-

efit from the Intelligent Transportation System, according to city vice mayor Lin Wenxi, who is also chairman of the new committee.

Lin said the committee will focus on the establishment of the Games' information system, and organizing events, safety checks and the opening and closing ceremonies through technological consultation and problem-solving. Working closely with

the Organizing Committee and developers of Olympic construction projects to guarantee the implementation of relevant high-tech Olympic construction programs is another key task of the committee.

The Science and Technology committee should also strengthen the efficiency of communication of scientific information among relevant departments to promote the goal

of a "high-tech Olympics," Lin added. Attention should be paid to the latest scientific achievements and breakthroughs worldwide to ensure their use in the Beijing Olympics.

Speaking at the launch, city mayor Liu Qi urged that technological innovations be utilized in order to present to the world a best ever Olympics, featuring the very latest in science and technology.

## Industrial and Commercial Bank Striving for Transparency

By Shan Jinliang

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) became the first Chinese state-owned bank to release information on its revenues in the media last week.

The largest of China's four state-owned banks, ICBC first printed its 2001 annual report in page 4 of the June 6 issue of *China Securities* after China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, published the Temporary Regulation on Information Releasing of Commercial Banks.

The bank's revenues climbed to 34 billion yuan, a 24 billion yuan rise from the year before, setting a new bank record. Its profits hit 5.89 billion yuan, a 15.8% increase, drawn reserves for bad debts were 17.478 billion yuan, 7.356 billion higher than the previous year, and the to-be-collected interest rose to 7.354 billion yuan.

The quality of the bank's assets has improved greatly. Its proportion of bad loans fell by 3.59% and overall bad loans dropped to 2.343 billion yuan. Only 0.22% of its outstanding loans cannot be repaid. Around 10% of those bad loans are in branches in Shanghai, Zhejiang Province, and Beijing.

The bank also witnessed better payment of new loans, individual real estate loans and highway loans, reaching or approaching the standards of international banks.

According to a comment piece published in *China Securities* on June 7, the bank's move represents its efforts to operate more transparently.

The report emphasized the breakthrough of the bank's systematic reform. In the report, the bank says, "We have removed some branches that have been losing money with few odds of regaining profits. Our total number of branches has dropped to 28,300, one third fewer than our highest-ever number, and our total staff has shrunk to 429,000 employees, three fourths of our peak figure." The bank has also strived to streamline its management.

"ICBC's financial assets account for one third of those of the nation's four major state banks," according to a report on Donews.com, "The release of the report is a great leap forward, but this annual report is still inferior to those listed companies. Unprofessional terms are used in the report, and it is unclear whether the profits of 2001 refers to net profits or overall profits."

The Bank of China, China Construction Bank and the Agricultural Bank of China are also expected to publicly release their 2001 annual reports.

## Markets Cover Up Genetically-Modified Foods

By Shan Jinliang

Despite the passage of a regulation requiring their clear labeling on March 20, genetically modified (GM) food products still do no carry "GM" labeling, revealed an independent survey conducted by *China Youth Daily* last week.

As China imports a large amount of GM food products from Canada, Argentina and other countries, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture required all such foods to be clearly marked. There are more than 20 kinds of products on the list of foods that require GM labels.

Not only have no GM food products been found to be so labeled, some bean products in Beijing supermarkets are marked with "Non-GM" labels.

"The total amount of GM foods in the whole domestic market has reached 20 million tons," said Xia Youfu, a professor at the University of International Trade and Economics. He added that bean, corn and rape-based products are possible GM foods.

Reporters from the paper selected two large supermarkets and two fast-food restaurants and sampled 12 kinds of bean, potato, tomato and corn-based foods, including salad oil, potato chips, ketchup and imported sweet corn products. All the foods checked were produced after March 20, according to their production date labels.

The samples were then taken to the technical center of the Beijing Entry-exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau to be checked. The center's methods have been widely accepted by the European Union, Japan and Singapore. The results of the check were released on June 3 and showed the five bean salad products are all GM foods.

Mr Zhang, who requested his full name not be used, said in a shopping market in Fuxingmen, "As a common citizen, I am not very clear about the safety of GM food, but I think it should be OK, since the government checks food products before they are put on store shelves." Labeling GM foods is a way to show respect to consumers, he added.

"As a salesman, I should be told which ingredients of products are genetically modified and how GM labels should be applied" said Mr. Hao, an employee at the market. He added the government should establish an effective system for managing GM foods.

Realizing the urgent need for the GM food regulation, the Ministry of Agriculture and the State Economic & Trade Commission released the Ninth Five-year Plan for the Food Industry early last month, saying the government would implement a system for GM food inspection and approval.



## Cops Check Out Advanced Equipment at Police Expo



Photos by Chen Shuyi

By Shan Jinliang

Facial identification technology, which could enable police to search for suspects in crowded places like bus stations, has been a highlight at the China International Exhibition on Police Equipment that opened at the China Agricultural Exhibition Hall on June 11.

This equipment can scan faces in crowds and identify individuals, allowing police at bus stations, airports, and national border crossings, to find suspects faster.

Apart from the facial identity technology, a number of high-tech products for police use, such as protective equipment, riot guns and bullets, telecommunication gear and vehicles are on display at the exhibition. This event, the most authoritative police equipment exhibition in China, has attracted around 260 organizations from more than 20 countries including the US, the UK, Germany, Russia and Japan. Helicopter demonstrations and technology exchanges have also been held.

The four-day event is only open to police personnel. The exhibition will be held every other year starting this year.

## City's Oldest Town Undergoes

### Five-year Face-lift

Restoration efforts underway at Yongning Ancient Town

By Shan Jinliang

Thousands flocked to Yuhuang Pavilion in the center of 500-year-old Yongning Ancient Town in rural Yanqing County, the oldest town in the Beijing area, for the town's launch of a major restoration and protection campaign on June 8.

Despite being one of the 33 key towns in Beijing, Yongning is still a poor place. "The average yearly income for local people is around 3,000 yuan, half the general average for Beijing's rural areas," said Peng Sujun, a public relations officer of the Town Office, "and it is even lower than the average for all of Yanqing County."

Last year, the Yongning government decided to boost the area's economy through developing its tourism trade. They then invited state-level ancient architecture experts Zheng Xiaoxie and Luo Zhewen, director of the China Cultural Relics Society, to make an

appraisal on the old town this March. They concluded that the town, located in the middle of the Great Wall area, is home to numerous cultural relics from the mid-Ming Dynasty. The town was originally part of the defense system of the Great Wall and has kept its original square layout with criss-crossing lanes and streets.

Located 80 kilometers north of downtown Beijing, the town is easy to reach through the no.107 and no.108 state roads and the Badaling Expressway. Yongning is also a good leaping point to the Longqing Gorge to the north, Kangxi Grasslands and the Badaling Great Wall in the south.

Local officials, with help from the China Ancient Architectures Association, drew up development plans for the area in early May and quickly received approval from the Beijing Capital Planning Committee. Through four phases over five

years, they plan to build a replica of the old town that will be a destination for tourists and TV and film shoots, Peng told *Beijing Today*.

When housing in the area planned to be developed was dismantled, "local villagers gave old photos and written materials describing the former layout of the town and even some plaques from the four town gates," said Peng. He added that while local authorities were careful in reconstructing the town, no tourism experts have been invited to give input on the town's development plan.

According to the plan, the four avenues that meet at a cross intersection in the replica town will be oriented towards cultural education, craft shops, ancient relics and, food and accommodation. "Sales of commercial apartments to be built along these streets have been strong," Peng added.

## College Grads Get Easier Access to 'Green Cards'

By Shan Jinliang

College graduates will be able to get the Beijing permanent residential status (*hukou*) if they are employed by foreign-funded enterprises starting this year, said Xin Tiehong, director of the city's Personnel Bureau last week.

Restrictions on immigrant university graduates regarding their fields of study, universities and number will be loosened to facilitate recruitment by foreign-invested enterprises.

New employees under the age of 45 are entitled to a Beijing *hukou* if they are employed by a foreign-invested high-tech, software, or environmental protection company, a research and development institution, or a regional headquarters of a multinational company. Staff under the age of 35 with bachelor degrees or middle-level technicians can receive *hukous* after having local residential certificates for three years and getting a recommendation from their employers.

## Wanping Fort Restored to Old Form

By Zhang Ran

Restoration of Wanping fort, near the site of the start of Japan's full-scale invasion of China at the Marco Polo bridge on July 7, 1937, will be completed at the end of this month, making it ready to apply to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for World Cultural Heritage site status.

The restoration efforts, which started on November 2, 2001 have cost 3 million yuan and four turrets, two pavilions and other buildings in the 336-square-meter fort have been redone.

"We have tried our best to make the city look as it did in the Ming Dynasty. The size of bricks and stones and the style of windows and the eaves are of the same as those used at that time," said Lv Yuliang, director of the Cultural Relics Administration of Fengtai District.

He added, "But all the bullet holes and damage caused by bombing during the war against Japan have been kept. We do not want people to forget the humiliating history of China during the War of Resistance against Japan."

## Parking Fees Jacked Up Citywide

By Zhang Le

Following the passage of a new regulation by the Beijing government, car parking fees in the city have risen since June 6.

Moreover, public parking lots are now required to pay compensation above insurance payments to customers whose vehicles are stolen or damaged.

Parking charges vary by area, parking time and type of vehicle. The fee for small vehicles is 2 yuan per hour and 4 yuan for large vehicles in open-air parking lots inside the Fourth Ring Road in the daytime, while lots outside the Fourth Ring charge 1 yuan per hour for small vehicles and 2 yuan for large ones. Charges for small vehicles and large vehicles are 1 yuan and 2 yuan for two hours at night throughout the city.

Parking fees in residential communities have also been adjusted to 1 yuan for two hours for small vehicles and 2 yuan for large vehicles. The first hour of parking in public lots is free. The monthly fee for small vehicle parking has been set at 150 yuan and 210 yuan for large vehicles.

To ease congestion, the standard fee has been raised to 5 yuan per hour for small vehicles and 10 yuan for large vehicles in lots in eight major commercial areas: Wangfujing, Dongdan, Qianmen, Xidan, Financial Street, Chaowai Street, Chongwai Street, Central Business District of Chaoyang District and Zhongguancun core area.

**CNNIC Still Works**

By Su Wei

The cooperation between Hong Kong First Telecom (HKFT) and China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) on IP800 technology was once seen as a key step in resolving CNNIC's problems caused by the bankruptcy of Realnames. "CNNIC has found another partner to take the place of Realnames," one source declared.

Both CNNIC and HKFT, however, maintain there is no connection between the cooperation and the common name key word Internet technology. According to deputy director of CNNIC Liu Zhijinag, HKFT said the report must have resulted from a misunderstanding.

Liu points out, "IP800 is just a new value added services provided by CNNIC, like the stock tracking system and voice supported Internet surfing." He concedes the company is still working hard on negotiations with Microsoft. "We are to incur losses. But it is an agreement between Microsoft and Realnames."

Liu says he could not predict the result of the negotiations, adding simply that, "Everything will be clear by the end of June."

**Tianjin Xiali Exports to U.S.**

By Jiang Zhong

250 Xiali economy cars and auto parts worth \$200,000 were shipped to the U.S. on June 10.

The buyer, American Automobile Network Holdings (AANH), will sell the cars on the global market. Tianjin Automobile Industrial I&E (TAIEC) and AANH signed the contract for cooperation on April 29. The contract grants AANH exclusive worldwide manufacturing and distribution rights of the Chinese-built motor vehicles.

Ken Wallett, CEO of AANH, points out that the outstanding presence of Xiali in China's taxi market proves its products' advantages in oil consumption, reliability and price. He says, "This agreement is a first time event in the automotive industry to award exclusive worldwide manufacturing and distribution rights to Chinese-built motor vehicles. Tianjin's history of producing high quality motor vehicles will now have a new chapter with its worldwide distribution. From day one we will be committed to work closely with Tianjin management the distributors and dealerships to ensure the highest level of service to our customers."

AANH plans to immediately begin distribution of the motor vehicles outside the US and begin the certification process of Tianjin motor vehicles for US distribution and other worldwide markets requiring certification.

**Software Incubator Enhances Product Competitiveness**

By Shan Jinliang

Zhongguancun Software Park Incubator welcomed its first resident when it opened on June 6.

The incubator, aimed at promoting Beijing's international competitiveness, is located near the Shangdi Information Industries Base. Besides venture capital, the incubator also offers a technical support system, including a shared database, tool base and development platform.

The park also boasts restaurants, banks, post offices and telecommunications service centers, as well as spacious apartments for resident specialists.

Zhongguancun Sci-tech Software, the first company to take up residency in the park, is jointly invested by Zhongguancun Sci-tech, Stone Group and Microsoft, with an overall investment of 100 million yuan. The company mainly focuses on general resources platforms.

**AUTO INDUSTRY**

# Chiefs Heat up Auto Expo

By Jiang Zhong

The 7th Beijing International Automotive Industry Exhibition wound up yesterday. Some 400,000 people visited the seven-day exhibition.

Most major international auto manufacturers demonstrated their keenness to conquer the vast potential market in China with the introduction of latest products and the attendance of the companies' top executives at the exhibition.

BMW sold 5,700 cars in China last year, the second highest sales volume in Asia, with the annual growth rate reaching 51%. In the first quarter of 2002, the company has already sold some 2,400 here.

Guenther Seemann, BMW China's managing director, said he hoped as many Chinese people as possible would have their own BMW as soon as possible. Seemann said that the auto exhibition in Beijing offered a great opportunity for BMW to improve communication with Chinese customers.

With the introduction of the M series at the expo, the company has introduced its complete line of state-of-the-art cars driven by high tech. The mid-term plan of BMW in China in the forthcoming five years includes increasing the number of its service stations here from 22 to 50.

Dieter Laxy, senior vice president of Volvo, has visited China twice in three months.

He pointed out that China fea-



Carlos Ghosn



Guenther Seemann



Dieter Laxy

tured the large potential markets in all segments and Volvo had seen dramatic growth in Chinese market last year. Volvo sold 2,000 cars in China last year, and hopes to keep the annual growth rate at over 10%, meaning that the annual sales of Volvo in China would exceed 10,000 units in five years.

Nissan introduced the new Bluebird at the expo. President Carlos Ghosn said that production of Bluebird series in Japan had stopped, but would continue in China, because the specifications of the Chinese Bluebird had fully met the company's requirements.

Dong Feng, the manufacturer of Chinese Bluebird, had imported technology from Nissan only. Nissan hoped to expand the cooperation with the second largest auto manufacturer of China.

Philip Murtaugh, General Motors China CEO, spent a busy week before the exhibition. He first flew to Shanghai on June 4 to sign a contract forging a three-way alliance with Shanghai Automotive Industry and Wuling Automobile. He returned to Beijing on June 6 to introduce Saab 9-5 series to local consumers.

He said GM must seek concrete operation in China for fulfilling its ambition to become the largest auto manufacturer in China in five to ten years, and that GM's cooperation with the two local manufacturers would contribute greatly to the company's China strategy.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

# Mystery Buyer Appears for AGC

## A little-known company and its influential president

By Yang Xiao

The bidding for Asia Global Crossing (AGC) is among four possible winners. Hutchison Whampoa, CITIC (Hong Kong) and China Netcom are all major players, but Hong Kong based Chinese mainland private company Purple Communication is little known, both inside and outside the field.

Purple Communication's Chinese name is "Min Ying", the same pronunciation as the word "private." When *Beijing Today* telephoned the company's Beijing office, public relations chief and assistant to the president Chow Hang, refused to be interviewed.

When the reporter arrived uninvited at the company's headquarters at Jing Tai Tower on Jianguomenwai Street Wednesday, Chow commented dryly, "You are the fifth intruder this week."

According to Chow, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* misled readers. The company's English name is not Purple, but MinTel. Purple is the subsidiary of MinTel in Hong Kong. MinTel was established at the end of 2000, with a registered capital of 50

million yuan. The Hong Kong subsidiary's registered capital is 20 million yuan. Several individuals hold investments in the private company. The president is Liu Minxue.

Liu Minxue is no doubt an unfamiliar name to many in the IT field, but he is known in China as a person of some influence, with a strong government background. During the early 1990s he held the ministry-level post of director of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce. He is also a member of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

There is little other information available about him, and Chow refused to provide more details.

Chow refused to reveal the percentage of shares held by Liu, saying, "We hope the media do not say much about the link between our president and his former positions in the government. We want to keep our privacy. The company is a legitimate private company. That is it."

MinTel developed with dramatic speed in China. After just

12 months, the company had established four branches, in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The main business is the Internet integrated solutions of the data center, which holds 18% of the market, second only to China Telecom, and materials in telecom infrastructure.

According to *21CN Business Herald*, MinTel's main business comes after an acquisition with a company named 21ViaNet. Yang Yingjie, general manager of MinTel, said a couple of months ago that it would employ JP Morgan to arrange its IPO.

But for the company to raise money is not a difficult matter. For the bidding for AGC it has \$300 million in financing lined up from a fund directed by New York-based American International Group.

AGC has a fiber-optic network that reaches China's borders. But its high debt load has put off many bidders. It states that it is looking for an "investor injection" and does not view itself as being for sale. But it is 58.9% owned by a company in bankruptcy - Global Crossing. AGC,



MinTel's luxuriously appointed headquarters are hidden away in an ordinary-looking office building on Jianguomenwai Street

Photo by Chen Shui

run out of offices in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, ran into financial trouble after a spat with its parent, Global Crossing.

The company, which is legally held in Bermuda, has filed for bankruptcy in the US. It company defaulted on a \$400 million loan from AGC, canceling it last December. AGC says it has cash to last it through the second quarter of 2003. But after the

loan crisis, it ran aground under its debt load of some \$1 billion, including the obligations of its Pacific Crossing subsidiary.

The cash crisis has forced the company to hire investment bank Lazard Freres to seek outside offers. Lazard set Friday as the date for preliminary bids. There is no guarantee they will become final offers according to *the Asian Wall Street Journal*.

# Focusing on the Diversification

By Su Wei

TCL launched its new line of mobile phones recently at Shanghai's Grand Hyatt Hotel. The top of the range model features twelve diamond fragments embedded in the casing.

**Business Transformation**

The first domestic mobile phone manufacturer to adopt Intel's XScale technology, TCL says it is determined to increase its mobile phone production to 5 million units annually. With the company's communication investment increasing to over \$6 million, TCL seems to be changing its focus from manufacturing televisions to mobile phones.

Yuan Xincheng, vice president of TCL spoke to *Beijing Today* recently.

**Beijing Today:** Why has TCL gone to such lengths in the promotion of its new mobile phone range?

**Yuan:** TCL has no particular advantages in TV production, compared with overseas manufacturers. Likewise with mobile phones. But it does not mean we have no core ability of competition. Our innovative concept is our core ability of competition. The innovation is also a reflection of our business model.

**Beijing Today:** Does that also mean



Yuan Xincheng Photo by Chen Shui

that the new mobile phone range will bring profits and cover future costs?

**Yuan:** We calculated that for the one years' production of our top of the range model, we will need some dozens of millions of diamond fragments. Although the diamond market in the Southern East Asia is certain to experience a severe impact.

**Diversification or Unification?**

Ni Ruiqing, CEO of China's biggest TV manufacturer Changhong, said in his address to an economic forum at the recent Beijing High-tech Expo that the company would expand production of rear-projection TVs to 500,000 by the end of 2002 to

boost profitability and achieve the goal of becoming the world's top TV maker.

Compared with Changhong, TCL has not confined itself to producing TVs. Its products range from air conditioners and televisions to mobile phones and personal computers.

**Beijing Today:** What is TCL's strategic aim in the future?

**Yuan:** Over the next ten years, we will focus on the diversification of relevant products and become a company with a worldwide reputation. To be more precise, we need to explore the international market, employ a greater number of capable technicians and sales personnel, as well as raise the popularity of TCL. At the moment we need to make great efforts to meet our targets.

**Beijing Today:** To what extent do TVs weigh in TCL's strategy?

**Yuan:** Multi-media and communication must be ranked as world-class products and others may only need to become the national-class products.

**Management reform good for all?**

After TCL's shareholder's system adjustment, 18% is for newly added strategic shares held by the five overseas compa-

nies including Toshiba. TCL considers the world class' companies enhance their core ability to compete and the diversification of shareholding will reduce their management and operational risks.

Yuan points out that though he considers Changhong is making important achievement in China's western regions, some analysts say the company needs to make breakthroughs in its management structure, particularly referring to the capital.

Changhong's Ni agrees. He once stated in a newspaper interview that the company's operational condition would be much better if some of the shares were used for establishing joint ventures or held by the staff.

As for TCL's shareholder system reform, it has been reported that TCL is to have another company listed in the domestic market.

When *Beijing Today* asked Yuan to identify which subsidiary of TCL was to be listed, he responded, "TCL International, listed in Hong Kong, and TCL Communication, listed in Shenzhen, those with sound operation and capital base are under consideration. But the timing has not been decided."

# China Privileges Overseas Professionals

By Zhao Hongyi

**C**itizenship, resident permit, high salary, and stock options emerge as the new keywords in China's long-time effort to attract overseas talent, while "investment immigrant" and "technical immigrant" have long been familiar to any Chinese who has ever considered emigrating abroad. Recently however the Chinese government has also been using the "immigrant" status to attract people desiring to live and work in China.

The "2002-2005 Program for Training and Introducing Talent to Government, Businesses and Research Institutions" strongly recommends offering citizenship, a long-term resident permit, a high annual salary, as well as stock options and shares to lure senior talent from overseas, including both foreigners and overseas Chinese.

The program is a mid-term policy initiative drafted by the administrative offices of China's Communist Party central committee and the State Council, signifying that the recommendations have been accepted by both the ruling party and the Central government. The report of the initia-

tive is due to be published soon. Meanwhile the program reveals that the most urgently needed talents in China are those from the IT, bio-technology, new materials, advanced manufacturing technologies, aviation and astronaut industries, as well as senior professionals in financing, legal affairs, international trade, and scientific and technological management.

Overseas Chinese students are the top priority, but the program promises all applicants excellent working and living conditions, including research laboratories, competitive salaries, vacation, long-term residence status, social welfare, and many other benefits.

The program recommends that senior positions in public services, corporate management and technological expertise be open to those talents introduced.

According to the initiative, the government encourages both domestic and overseas professionals to migrate toward the tertiary sector, from big cities to small and medium-sized ones, from the east of the country to the west.



Invited by the CBD management committee, over 40 representatives of the multinationals in Beijing visited the Central Business District (CBD) in downtown Beijing this Wednesday. The reps feel surprised and excited at the investing environment in the tiny piece of land.

Photo by An Dong

## "It Will Be a Great Mistake If..."

By Zhao Hongyi

"It will be a great mistake if we don't come to China," Larry Ellison, Oracle's chairman and CEO, stressed several times at the opening session of "OracleWorld Beijing 2002" this Wednesday. He was explaining why it was the first time ever his company held the worldwide meeting in China.

Since last month, banners and billboards advertising "OracleWorld Beijing 2002" have been ubiquitous in Beijing. Oracle's prod-

uct exhibition and technology convention attracts tens of thousands of reporters, industrial experts, Oracle software users, business managers and technicians from the world. The company invites its technical partners and product users to share their experiences, demonstrate the latest products and exchange IT achievements.

After 11 years of presence in China, Oracle claims to be the largest software developer in the world with a business revenue of US\$

10.9 billion last year (and a profit rate of over 30%). It now aims to conquer its third market in the Asia and Pacific region, after Japan and South Korea.

As a mainframe software developer for enterprises and group users, Oracle's products include cross-platform data processing, accounting, and e-commerce applications which are commonly used in financial services, telecommunications, government, manufacturing, transportation, and energy industries.

"China's economy is increasing at an alarming rate. As the most reliable, competitive and compatible software products provider, Oracle is always trying to catch up with China's economic growth," Ellison told the press at the opening of "OracleWorld Beijing 2002".

The company's report states that China's entry to the World Trade Organization and the country's rapidly developing economy has created better market conditions. Beijing as host to the 2008 Olympic Games and the central government's priority of investing in IT projects also offers Oracle a greater market potential.

On June 1, Oracle established its China Development Center in Shenzhen, the first of its kind in the country, and will set up a second in Beijing within the next few years.

During the three-day convention and exhibition, Oracle launched a number of marketing programs to compete with its rivals Microsoft, IBM, Sun, and others. Major events include introducing the Chinese version of Oracle's free training software (Oracle Technology Network), and demonstrating Oracle9i software and e-business suite products.

## 350 Billion Yuan in Railway Construction

China will invest 270 billion yuan in the construction of railways and another 80 billion yuan in purchasing locomotives and rail wagons, according to Mr. Cai Qinghua, the country's vice minister of railways.

China aims to equip its railway industry with the most advanced technologies and facilities by the year 2015.

## Overseas Capital Continues to Pour

Sources from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) reveals that in the first five months of this year, 11,612 foreign-funded enterprises have been approved. The total contract investment amounts to US\$ 27.864 billion, showing a 7.29% increase. Actual input capital amounts to US\$ 16.922 billion, showing a 12.38% increase.

## Swiss Biz Comes

A 90-member delegation consisting of businessmen, scientists and technicians from Switzerland has just launched "Science & Innovation" week in Beijing, in order to promote investment projects of environmental protection, public transportation and other financing in the capital.

The delegation signed an agreement with its Chinese partners for a five-year project to improve energy conservation and industrial waste disposal, to which the Swiss government will grant 10 million Swiss francs.

Last year bilateral trade between the two countries reached 3.93 billion Swiss francs, as over 600 Swiss companies have entered the Chinese market.

## World Cup Stimulates South Korea's Exports to Beijing

Recent statistics show South Korea's exports to China, through the channels of Beijing, have surged so far by 47.9% to reach US\$ 240 million this year, thanks to the World Cup soccer games currently underway in South Korea and Japan. Major exports include garments, mobile phones, cosmetics, fashion designs, food and beverages, TV series and movie discs.

Samsung's mobiles rank the first in the category, with a total of US\$ 71.79 million. Garments and fashion designs total over US\$ 10 million.

Zhao Hongyi

## Ping An Insurance Recruits Overseas

By Zhao Hongyi

China's Ping An Life Insurance launched its second recruiting campaign in Chinese Taiwan this week, advertising 26 senior management vacancies in the Chinese mainland. High salaries and welfare are provided, but any involvement of its Taiwan employees in mainland love affairs is strictly forbidden.

Ping An, a private insurer based in Shenzhen, has seen a rapid growth in the past decade and is spreading its business to all over China. Reports say the insurer will establish 55 city and province centers in the country this year. Ping An's urgent need for senior business trainers stems from its ambitious move

to conquer the mainland.

Taiwan, where life insurance has developed quite successfully over the past decades, is the company's best source for recruiting experienced professionals. Ping An is counting on its staff from Chinese Taiwan to train its thousands of staff on the mainland.

Ping An benefits include an average monthly salary of 50,000 yuan (US\$ 6,000), housing subsidies, business development funds, medical pension and several other types of insurance, plus an extra fund for recruiting assistants. But Ping An also prohibits its Taiwan employees from being involved in religion, politics, or extra-marital love affairs on the mainland.

## Zhongguancun Goes On-line at Sina.com

By Zhao Hongyi

Zhongguancun Science Park, the only high-tech science park under the municipal government, collaborates with Sina.com for inviting investment and on-line public relations. The Chinese web portal has agreed to post Zhongguancun Science Park's high-tech investment projects on its website at <http://www.zgc.sina.net>.

Zhongguancun has always been successful in attracting investment and initiating projects, as a number of IT multinationals find their roots in the park. The park has become a famous incubator for high-tech

ventures, particularly those of Chinese students returning from study and work abroad.

Sina.com is China's largest portal, already well-known to the mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The English version of its website is aimed at visitors in North America.

More than US\$ 42 billion in capital entered China last year, encouraging the Central government to raise its target for this year to US\$ 50 billion. Meanwhile Zhongguancun Park believes it can attract US\$ 800 million in investments, based on last year's US\$ 600 million.



Photo by Li Guiming

## International Franchises Join Hands with Local Investors

By Zhao Hongyi

Thousands of local investors are lining up to operate franchises such as McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in China, although few of them will be able to meet their final goal. At the same time, hundreds of local franchise brands are emerging, inviting small and medium sized businessmen to join hands.

At the 4th China Franchise Exhibition & Convention held in Beijing on June 13-15, Pei Liang, deputy secretary general of the China Chain Store & Franchise Association (CCFA), claimed the number of potential local business partners interested in operating McDonald's or KFC restaurants is huge enough for the two groups to do business in China over the next few years.

"KFC requires a start-up investment of 8 million yuan, which is a substantial amount for a small or medium investor," Pei explained, "before even consid-

ering operational requirements such as customer density, staff qualification, and so on."

McDonald's has opened almost a hundred outlets in



China, all run directly by its headquarters in the US. While the group has franchised 352 outlets in Taiwan and 198 in Hong Kong, "not a single McDonald's has been franchised yet on the Chinese mainland," said Pei.

In order to address the country's increasing demand, both groups have sent their senior management to the Convention to deliver the details behind the principles of franchising their outlets.

In China, local chain stores and franchises have finally entered a phase of prosperity after a decade of ups and downs. This year's 4th China Chain Store & Franchising Exhibition and Convention reunites hundreds of local brands who welcome potential investors. Brands up for grabs include McDonald's, KFC and

Quanjude (Beijing Roast Duck) in the food and restaurant business, Lianhua Super Stores, Hualian Super Stores, Sanlian Home Appliances, Guomei Electronics and Suining Home Appliances in retailing, Pulande in laundry, and many others in beauty and fitness.

"Local brands require low investment, from 50,000 to 500,000 yuan," said Pei. "This gives great hope to potential business operators."

More than ten overseas delegations attended the exhibition, representing International Franchise Association from the USA, Philippine Franchise Association, Singapore International Franchise Association, Korea Franchise Association from South Korea, Taiwan Chain Store & Franchise Association, and Taiwan Franchise Association, among others.

Crowds flocked to the exhibition in search of business opportunities

Photo by Zhang Xuekun

# Questions Clip Spraying of Air Freshener

By Sun Ming

After special spraying cars cruised a major street in Beijing for two days spreading rose-scented air freshener into the air, the operation was halted on June 9.

The spraying activity, in which 300 kilograms of air freshener was used along Ping'an Avenue, had been scheduled to last five days.



Zheng Hongzhong proving his product is harmless  
Photo by Zhuang Jian

"This was the first time that air freshener was used on the streets of Beijing," said Wu Xinlin, manager of the Cleaning Service Center of Xincheng District Environmental Sanitation Bureau, which directed the spraying on June 7 and 8.

Regarding why the spraying was stopped, "We soon received telephone calls from citizens concerned that the air freshener could be harmful," Wu told *Beijing Today*.

Wu admitted that the bureau didn't carefully consider the plan and was only aware that the air freshener would have a rose-like fragrance.

The air freshener, with a total price tag of 60,000 yuan, was all donated by Beijing Hua Hong Wei Ye Trading Company, an air freshener distributor.

"We hope people can breathe fresh air," Hua Hong Wei Ye manager Zheng Hongzhong explained to *Beijing Today* when asked about the motives behind the donation.

Zheng said the air freshener can neutralize bacteria in the air, and produced a copy of a report saying the product was effective in inhibiting the growth of *coliform* bacteria.

In order to prove the innocuousness of the air freshener, Zheng drank it and sprayed it into his mouth in front of a *Beijing Today* reporter.

However, many citizens still have doubts about the spraying.

"Air freshener can't improve air quality, it only conceals unpleasant odors with fragrance," said Xu Dongqun, a researcher at the Institute of Environmental Health Monitoring.

"Air flow is fast, so fragrance dissipates quickly, to say nothing of its limited effects on airborne bacteria," added Xu.

Song Ruijin, professor at the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, said that all air fresheners contain chemical components that are poisonous to some degree. They widespread spraying of these products could lead to soil pollution and harm people's skin.

"The improvement of air quality shouldn't depend on the spraying of air freshener," added Song.

Fan Ping, a scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, indicated that the Cleaning Service Center of Xincheng District Environmental Sanitation Bureau was unwise to undertake the spraying plan.

"Not all people like this kind of artificial fragrance," said Fan, "The center shouldn't impose this on people."

He added, "In the end, a lot of air freshener was sprayed on the street. Passers-by had no choice but to passively take it in."

## Man Seeks Sorry from Police through Sit-In

By Sun Ming

Over the past 20 days, Shi Fan, an over 40-year-old Beijing man, has become a regular fixture outside the Xisanqi Police Station.

"I just want them to write an apology letter to me, but they have refused," Shi told *Beijing Times* as he sat in front of the station. Behind him was a beaten-up bicycle carrying an old quilt, a mat and a bag full of law books. Shi explained that he slept in front of the station sometimes when he got tired.

According to Shi, at 11 pm on May 12, he found a drunk man passed out on a road in Xisanqi in northwestern Beijing. He put the man on his bicycle, intending to wheel him to his home.

On the way, Shi met some policemen from the Xisanqi Police Station, so he turned the drunk man over to them and left.

"But a few minutes later, they caught up with me and demanded I show some identification," said Shi, "I showed them my passport, but they said that the photo in the passport doesn't look like me."

Then police officers took Shi back to the police station and searched his bag. According to the police, they quickly apologized to Shi after verifying his identity.

Shi used to be an instructor at Beijing Science & Technology University. He went abroad in 1994 and returned from the US last year. He is continuing his advanced studies at Beijing University.

Regarding Shi's demand for a written apology, Mr. Yao, the head of the police station who requested his full name not be used, said, "There isn't any legal basis for writing such a letter."

According to police, Shi still frequently sits in front of the police station. They have reported the case to their higher-ups.



Photo by Chen Shuyi



## Sea Lion Witnesses Wedding

A sea lion named Mike was the chief witness at a wedding ceremony held at the Beijing Aquarium last Saturday.

Neither the bride nor the groom work

in animal-related fields. Groom Fu Yujia said that he and his bride, Du Fengjuan, have both loved animals since their youth.

(Sun Ming)

## Disabled Wife Sues Unfaithful Husband

By Sun Ming/Wang Yuan

Last Friday, the trial of a lawsuit filed by a disabled wife against her husband started in Beijing Fangshan District People's Court. The woman is trying to get money to cover her costs of living and medical expenses

In the court, the wife, Dong Liying, accused her husband, Ma Zhiyi, of having an affair and living with their housekeeper. She said it was the main reason behind their son's suicide in January.

According to Dong, she married Ma in 1984, and then developed serious rheumatoid arthritis in 1987 after the birth of their second son. As a result, Dong's limbs are painfully distorted and she struggles to walk.

"My husband was kind to me in the first few years," Dong told the court, "But he gave me the cold shoulder starting in 1995 when an 18-year-old housekeeper appeared in our family."

According to Dong, her husband has lived with the housekeeper since 1996 in the same apartment with Dong and their two sons.

Dong said her husband seldom gives her and their sons money, leaving her to often ask for help from their relatives.

On January 25, her 14-year-old younger son committed suicide by drinking poison. Dong said her son expressed wishes that his father would go back to the family in a

suicide note.

After the suicide, friends stepped in and got Ma to agree to give his wife 400 yuan per month to cover her basic needs.

"But he only gave me the money two times. I have to pay for my costs of living and medical fees, so I had to sue him," said Dong.

Before the court, Ma Zhiyi, formerly the head of a small coal factory and now unemployed, said that he had performed his duties as a husband and father. In order to support his family, he had to consistently work overtime. "She thinks the man should earn the money for a family. She always asks for money from me, but I really have no more," he said.

According to Ma, his wife often told their younger son that the rheumatoid arthritis she suffered was the result of his birth. "After we had arguments, she would beat him. That was the reason behind my son's suicide," said Ma in the court.

Ma said he had asked for a divorce but his wife always refused.

The sudden appearance of the couple's 17-year-old elder son stunned Ma. He ordered his son to leave the court at once, yelling, "If you are my son, get out!" The son didn't utter a word, but stayed and watched the entire court proceedings.

The case is still under investigation.

## Bone Marrow Bank Short of Cash

By Li Lily

Liu Zhengsheng, 24, a graduate student at the Guanghua School of Management at Peking University, launched the Sun 1000 Plan for the Sun Bone Marrow Bank with his classmates on the morning of June 9. At the same time the Sun Volunteer Association was founded to support the bank's daily work.

The founders of the Sun 1000 plan will look for 1,000 marrow donators and try to raise 500,000 yuan to cover the medical expenses of leukemia patients, said Liu, organizer of the bank and the plan and a leukemia sufferer himself.

In only half a year, 500 volunteers have registered to donate marrow samples. The oldest volunteer is over 50 and the youngest a 14-year-old middle school student.



Zhuo Ling, Miss China, returned to China Tuesday after coming in as the Second Runner Up in the finals of the 51st Miss Universe Competition, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on May 29. Miss Russia, Oxana Fedorova, was crowned Miss Universe 2002 and Miss Panama, Justine Pasek, won First Runner Up.

This was the first time for a Chinese woman to participate in the pageant. Zhuo Ling, 19, is a model from the Yifei Modeling Company.

"Although almost 500 volunteers have signed up, we have received only 108 marrow samples," Liu said. "A complete marrow check costs 2,500 yuan. Because of a lack of money, about 400 volunteers can't undergo the procedure."

Liu's parents gave 50,000 yuan from their savings to cover the fees for the first 108 marrow samples.

"I have made a 64-page brochure with information about marrow donation," Liu said, "I hope it will draw more people to join in the marrow bank and more companies and individuals to contribute money to support leukemia patients' medical treatment."

For more information:

Website:  
<http://pknews.phu.edu.cn>  
Email: pkusun@sina.com

## Office Struggling under Fax Spam

By Li Lily

Last week, an employee at a foreign-funded company called the hotline of *Beijing Youth Daily* to complain about receiving many unsolicited advertisements through her office's fax machine.

"The fax machine in my office has become a convenient printer for ads since we released the fax number to the public," said Wang, "The longest we've received was over 9 pages."

Foreign funded companies normally make their fax numbers open to the public, but having their numbers published in the yellow pages opens them to unscrupulous advertisers.

"I have to change the cartridge in the fax machine everyday," added Wang. Moreover, the unwanted ads jam the lines, keeping important documents from being transmitted.

According to Wang, she has called the telephone numbers printed on the ads several times to stop their practice, but the advertisers always simply answered that her company's number is in the yellow pages.



The sign at Song Fubin's stall reads "Yellow notice: Cheater of Consumers"

Photo by Wen Ling

## Vender Gets Yellow Card

By Sun Ming

A yellow sign warning customers of a fraudulent vendor has been hung in front of a chicken stand by the administrators of the Shangdi Market.

The warning, which will not be removed until June 28, has drawn a lot of attention from consumers at the market.

According to the market's administration office in northwest Beijing, the vendor, Song Fubin, has perpetrated frauds against several customers.

Qin Naijun, from the market's administration office, said customers who buy live chickens usually asked vendors to help them to kill the chickens, which the customers then take back home. Song took advantage of some customers by replacing their live chickens with dead birds.

"On May 27, we received a complaint from a customer. So we de-

cided to give him a yellow warning sign, which can also be an alert to other vendors," said Qin.

Qin said it's also the first yellow warning sign posted by the market.

According to *Beijing Times*, however, some customers are still going to the stand. "They are regular customers," Song told a reporter from the newspaper. "My regular customers still believe in me."

However, one customer, a Mr. Li, told *Beijing Times* that he was sure Song wouldn't dare cheat people any more with the yellow sign hanging outside his stall.

Li Yajun, a senior lawyer at the Beijing Zhongzhao Lawyer Office, said, "The market's action is inadvisable and has no legal basis. I think that the vendor's rights and reputation have been violated, but I'm not sure exactly which rights. I've never heard of such a case before."

## Electronic Eyes Watch Market

By Li Lily

Sixteen security cameras have been watching every corner of the Panjiayuan Market, also called the "dirt market," since June 9.

According to the market's administration, a popular site for shopping for antiques, artwork and kitsch, the electronic eyes are used to monitor crowds and prevent fires, theft and fights. They were installed by the Beijing government at a cost of 300,000 yuan.

# “I climbed the 12th Watchtower”

Simatai Great Wall tells tourists to keep out of danger zone

By Chen Ying

**D**issidence between Simatai tourists and administrators over who is responsible when climbing the wild portion of the Great Wall draws attention after employees recently refused public access to the Wall's most attractive, and most dangerous, parts.

Following one tourist's complaint to the media, Wang Yongku, the manager of Simatai Great Wall Management Tourism Business Company, suggested the visitors sign a liability agreement if they insist on climbing past the designated area.

In mid-May, climbing enthusiast Tian Ye and his mountaineering friends arrived in Simatai for an expedition where their final destination was the famous Heavenly Ladder and Sky Bridge. But they were blocked by two guards at the 12th watchtower on the east side of the Wall who told them it was too dangerous to continue on to the steep and ruined sections beyond.

Simatai administration had erected a notice board at the 12th watchtower forbidding entry past that point when the Great Wall opened to tourists in 1987. At that time few people were able to reach the 12th watchtower, until cable cars were installed in 1996 to popularize access. As people attempted to climb the last stretch of the Wall to the east, accidents began to occur, some of them fatal.

However many tourists continued to trespass the board. In an attempt to prevent further tragedy, the administration hired guards from 1999 to reinforce the boundary at the 12th watchtower. Ever since then, it has been an endless point of contention between tourists and employees.

Given their extensive climbing experience, Tian and his friends were very disappointed. Since first conquering Simatai seven years ago, Tian considered himself familiar with the terrain, but they were equally forced to abandon their eastward trek.

Unsatisfied, Tian wrote a letter to the local media in search of a solution. His persistence was soon rewarded. Wang Yongku proposed to draft a liability agreement between tourists and the administration. According to the agreement, each tourist must comply with administrative regulations, stop at the 15th watchtower, return on time, and preserve the heritage according to national law. Visitors who do not respect the signed agreement would be responsible for themselves.

How to resolve the conflict between the tourists and the administration? Is signing an agreement a satisfactory solution? Opinions follow:

#### Tian Ye, climbing enthusiast

I understand the administration's decision. But conquering the difficulties of climbing is the most cherished experience of a true climber. That's why I hope the manager will also understand our point of view and find a compromise.

Even though it's dangerous, I believe I can conquer it. The famous scenery past the 12th watchtower is so beautiful, it's really a shame not to see it for yourself.

#### Wang Yongku, Manager, Simatai Great Wall Management Tourism Business Company

Drafting the agreement doesn't mean we are shirking responsibility. Two university students died here when they tried to climb the Heavenly Ladder and Sky Bridge. I still remember how heartbroken their parents were. I felt guilty. That's why we put guards at the 12th watchtower.

Someone even advised us to add security rails along the most

dangerous parts. But we refused, because Simatai is famous for preserving the Great Wall's original features. All types of wall architecture can be found here. Simatai is a piece of "wall art". In terms of protecting national heritage, it's totally irresponsible to casually set up guard rails. We can understand tourists' intense desire to further explore the world heritage, but it is our duty to protect their safety.

#### Fu Shide, lawyer, Beijing Jingwei Law Firm

An agreement which holds tourists unilaterally responsible for their own actions in a public area is invalid. The

area shouldn't be open if it does not meet safety regulations. If tourists insist on penetrating the dangerous areas, the administration should put up a notice to clearly separate these areas.

#### Meng Xiangfang, lawyer, Beijing Rongzhi Law Firm

I think this agreement is valid. Although the government authorizes the administration to manage Simatai Great Wall, there is no law stating whether people can climb its most dangerous parts.

So the administration has the right to make rules to protect the visitors. It has already done what it

can to warn tourists against danger. Today people should be used to dealing with each other in contractual agreements. Although life is invaluable, the administration cannot be responsible if there is no previous agreement. The employees' duty is more moral than legal.

#### Dong Yaohui, General Secretary, China Great Wall Association

Personally, I disagree with signing the agreement. That means attributing the risk to the tourists themselves. The administration should focus on how to better protect the tourists.

Simatai is one of the most important parts of Great Wall, embodying its history and value. But it's also the most dangerous section for visitors, so a clear distinction should be made between ordinary tourists and professional climbers.

People with experience in rock-climbing technology and hiking expeditions seek both the excitement of risk as well as the enjoyment of Simatai's ancient environment around the Great Wall. These professionals who plan to climb the Wall past the 12th watchtower can apply to the administration with proof of professional qualifications, as well as their intent to respect the national heritage.

However most people are just ordinary tourists who lack the basic skills and experience to climb seriously, let alone risk their lives. It's reasonable for the administration to prevent them from visiting the dangerous areas.

#### Eric Humphrey, hiking enthusiast, American

In the US, we have private land and public land. Public land is divided into state or federal.

On private land, the landowner should put up a barrier of some kind to prevent people from risking injury. If danger is not clearly marked and a person is hurt or killed on his property, the landowner could be sued by the person's family. In the case of trespassing, it's most likely the victim's own responsibility.

On public land, the rules are pretty much the same. For example, in a national park there may be a sign reading "Danger: enter at your own risk".

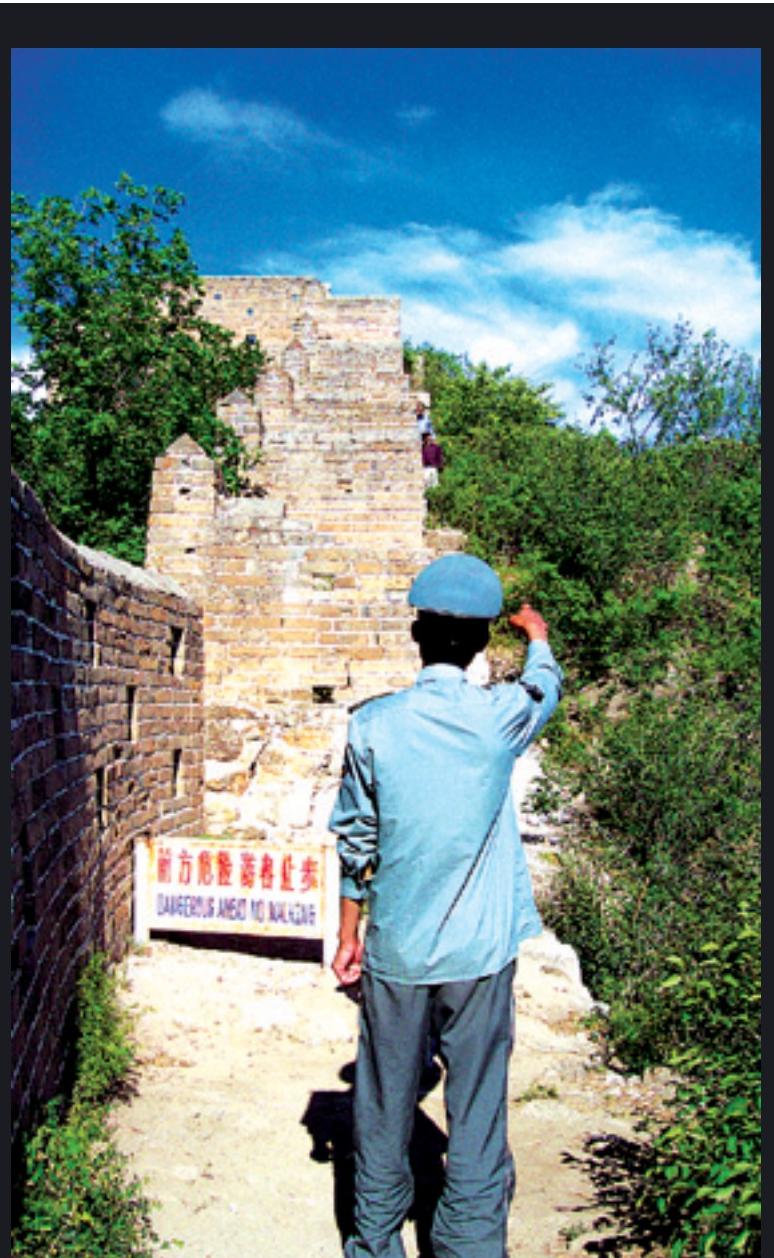
In my opinion, people should be responsible for their own actions. In this case, if the administration warns the tourists of the danger, then whatever happens beyond that point is out of administrative hands.

#### Sun Huilin, hiking enthusiast, BJ Hikers Organizer

I often organize hikes for both Chinese and foreigners. The last time my friends and I visited the Great Wall at Simatai there was no sign and no guards. But we turned around at 12th watchtower anyway because we thought it was too dangerous. Also, local people had warned us that some students had died after trying to climb the last parts.

Since the administration has made the effort to put up a notice board and hire employees specifically to inform tourists, I would choose to turn back instead of blaming or quarrelling with the guards. People should at least be considerate enough to respect the administrators' decision.

I can understand what some enthusiastic climbers must feel when they finally reach the peak. I also feel a sense of only partial achievement. Meeting a challenge is always exciting. But that doesn't mean they should break the rules, which are only fair. Better to climb another mountain than to embarrass the administration.



The 12th Watchtower

Photo by Wang Huichang

## That's Simatai

Simatai, located in the north of Miyun County, 120km northeast of Beijing, is the point of access to Gubeikou, a strategic pass in the eastern part of the Great Wall. The Great Wall at Simatai is 5.4km long with 35 beacon towers.

Originally built during the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577) and rebuilt in the Hongwu years of the Ming dynasty, Simatai is the only section of the Wall which preserves the original features of the Ming dynasty Great Wall.

According to the famous Great Wall specialist Professor Luo Zhewen, the Great Wall is the best of Chinese architecture, and Simatai is the best of the Great Wall.

Built on precipitous mountains, Simatai includes many places that are unmatched among other sections of the Wall. The Heavenly Ladder and the Sky Bridge are

particularly dangerous and awe-inspiring.

A valley separates the Great Wall at Simatai into two parts, east and west. The west part is relatively mild with 20 well-preserved watchtowers. In contrast, the east part is quite steep, with 15 watchtowers scattered over 1,000-meter-high peaks.

The main attractions in this part include the Beijing Watch Tower, the Fairy Tower, the Heavenly Ladder and the Sky Bridge.

Heavenly Ladder: leaning against the mountain at a 45-degree angle, it leads to the Beijing Watch Tower and the Fairy Tower. At its narrowest, it is only half a meter wide.

Sky Bridge: a mere 40 centimeters wide, it is actually 100 meters long, and connects the Fairy Tower to the Beijing Watch Tower.

## SOUND BITES WORLD CUP

"We finished last in our group and we didn't score a goal — but so did France, so we're in good company. I am proud of my players for the way they played."

— Saudi Arabia coach Nasser al-Johar referring to the shock exit of the defending world champions from Group A Tuesday

"I can remember everything about the game so clearly because it is one of those unforgettable occasions."

— South African skipper Lucas Radebe after beating Slovenia to record his country's first ever World Cup win

"We are all South Africans no matter our color."

— South African coach Jomo Sono sees a place in the second phase for his Rainbow Warriors.

"I don't think it was a surprise, it's just our mission to show the world what we've learned in the past four years."

— Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata after Japan scored its first World Cup victory against Russia

"Unlike African teams in the past who lacked discipline, we are staying cool."

— Senegal midfielder Salif Diao

"My team played a beautiful game with so much power and aggression, and I am very proud of them."

— Costa Rican coach Alexandre Guimaraes says a draw with Turkey wasn't so bad

"It took 44 years to get here, that's a very long time to wait for the World Cup."

— Chinese defender Fan Zhiyi after his team is humbled by Brazil

"This is probably the sweetest moment of my whole career."

— David Beckham lays a few ghosts to rest with his penalty winner against Argentina

"There are a lot of players knocking on the door here. They all want to play and that's very good."

— England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson says competition is what keeps his squad on its toes

"We know we are out of the competition, but we have our honor to defend."

— Nigeria coach Adegbeye Onigbinde promises a valiant match against England

"Germany must now be patient. Our youth set-up, which we have modeled on that of France, will bear fruit."

— Germany's World Cup-winning captain and coach Franz Beckenbauer looks enviously over the neighbors' fence

"He'd irritated the hell out of me with his diving."

— Irish defender Gary Breen is not impressed with German forward Miroslav Klose

"He's a great keeper and has a great future, although maybe he should play a bit more forward, almost like a sweeper."

— Paraguay shot-stopper Jose Luis Chilavert admires Spanish goalkeeper Iker Casillas

"In Germany in 2006 we will be more powerful. In 2010 we will explode."

— Former Ghanaian star Abedi Pele says an African World Cup triumph cannot be far away

"We were playing against a team who wasn't playing football."

— French goalkeeper Fabien Barthez slams an aggressive Uruguay

"It's in the past now but I will try not to do that again."

— Brazilian star Rivaldo, branded a cheat by FIFA, says he will clean up his act after being fined for feigning injury

By Chen Ying

# Chinese Card-Holders Deserve More Credit

By Su Wei

**H**orizonkey.com recently conducted a survey of people earning over 5,000 yuan per month or who own a family car, in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Chengdu, Nanjing, Xi'an, Zhengzhou, Dalian and Shenyang.

The survey also covered 42 kinds of bank-issued cards from 15 different banks, including the Commercial and Industrial Bank, Construction Bank, Agricultural Bank, Bank of China, Bank of Communication, Guangdong Development Bank, Everbright Bank of China, Huaxia Bank, CITIC Industry Bank, Pudong Development Bank, Fujian Industrial Bank, China Merchant Bank, Minsheng Bank, Shenzhen Development Bank and Guangdong Postal Savings.

**More people, more cards**

The average number of cards per card-holder is just over two, a little more than six months ago. Around 25% of those surveyed have only one bank card, while 15% say they have more than four.

Many Chinese people believe cards suggest higher social status and use them to show off their wealth. Meanwhile the central government has understood that bank-issued cards are vital in establishing a personal credit system and in promoting sponsorship.

Most domestic financing institutes have developed their individual credit assessment system by cooperating with other loan serv-

**C**hina UnionPay ("Yinlian" in Chinese), a firm specialized in bank-issued card networks, has just become Visa International Asia's newest member, in a key step to promoting the issuing of bank cards in China.

**Will bank-issued cards now proceed to sweep the nation? How do they fit into the lives of China's urban elite? Will they soon become a daily commodity for all?**



es or by offering credit on a trial basis, in order to attract customers and encourage people to apply.

The credit card application procedure has also been simplified. For example at the Construction Bank in Shanghai, individuals are

no longer required to provide a guarantor or a personal credit certificate sealed by their company.

Shanghai resident Wu Wei claims that "Now just the ID card is enough."

More importantly, the Chinese

government has been advised to learn from other countries such as South Korea, and is currently studying foreign policies of promoting the use of cards, such as giving tax reduction privileges to card users and encouraging enterprises to use cards

for commercial purchases.

Furthermore, since China's entry into WTO, overseas financial institutes have adapted their card-issuing programs to provide more opportunities for Chinese citizens, such as the Japanese credit card company JCB, who applied to the People's Bank of China for an extension of its JCB card-issuing business to China's inland areas.

Others such as Citibank and HSBC have applied to Bank of China for the licensing of foreign currency credit cards.

**Less use, less credit**

While less than 30% of card-holders say they use their cards daily, almost 34% say they use them rarely, and 15% admit to never using them at all.

Could this be because bank cards are simply not convenient? There are still a number of banks who issue cards which cannot be used in most Point of Sales (POS) machines or in a competing bank's ATM.

Even the supposedly unified unionpay system initiated by China UnionPay and other major domestic banks suffers from incompatibility problems.

Shanghai resident Zhang Yi recalls an embarrassing incident at the Meilongzhen Shopping Mall on Nanjing Xilu in Shanghai, where her Commercial and Industrial Bank issued credit card did not work with the POS at the mall. "Finally I just gave up and paid in cash. But what if I didn't have the cash on me?"

Adding insult to injury, Zhang

complained that money had been deducted from the card even though the card had just been refused by the POS.

Both the shopping mall's and the bank's refusal to take any responsibility for the situation left her speechless. "I cannot believe that only large bank branches are capable of providing a detailed credit card statement!"

But true credit cards are rare in China. According to Hang Weiqiang, general manager of MasterCard International, China, 90% of the over 300 million so-called credit cards issued in China are in fact debit cards used for immediate payment, as opposed to the 10% of cards used to postpone payment.

"Chinese consumers must first have the money in their account before they can use their card to spend it. This is different from world standards in application and overdraft."

However Hang claims this is not due to Chinese conservative consumer habits but rather to domestic banks' failure to provide a card service catered to the Chinese consumer market.

Finally, both domestic banks and merchants tend to overestimate the risk. Although banks may realize that the total income of personal loans amounts to only 5% of all loans, they prefer to limit their business to individuals with a solid credit history.

Meanwhile merchants are aware that every bank card transaction is electronically recorded, which makes tax evasion and false deductions a lot more tricky.

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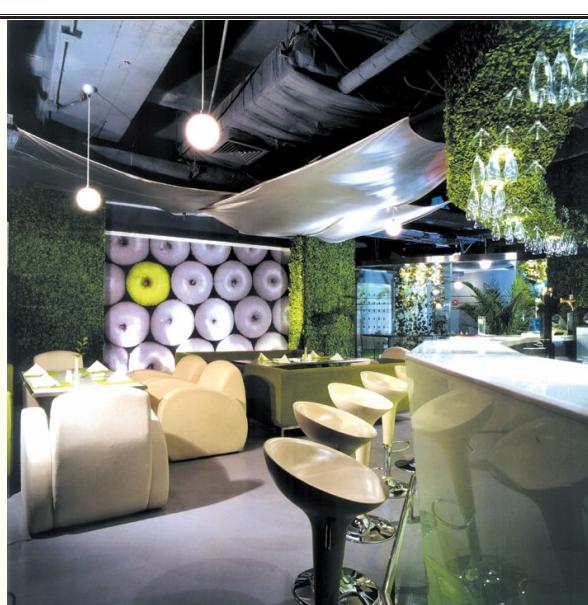
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**S**ince the Shanghai and Shenzhen Security Exchanges were established in 1990, dramatic improvements have been made in China's securities market, according to Zhou Xiaochuan, the president of the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC). By the end of April 2002, there were 1,175 listed companies in the Chinese securities market. A total of 810.1 billion yuan has been raised and the market value of all shares is 4.54 trillion yuan. About 67 million investors have opened accounts in the securities market. There are 118 securities corporations and 24,000 securities trading outlets in China with a total of 93.6 billion yuan of investment funds.

# Stock Price Manipulation Case Reaches Court



Seven people were tried from this Tuesday to Thursday, in the first round of the ongoing case. Ding Fugen, the main operator of 0048 stock, stands first from the right.

By Ivy Zhang

The fall of the judge's hammer started the hearing of a share price manipulation case, called the largest case ever involving China's stock market. It was held this Tuesday to Thursday at the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court.

The shares in question were in the Zhongke Chuangye Investment Co., and their value spiked over a period of around two years, bringing in massive profits for major shareholders, then crashed, leading to serious losses for many investors.

The players in the case raised a total of 5.4 billion yuan from more than 100 businesses and individuals as well as about 120 securities trading outlets across 20 provinces and municipalities in China.

The whereabouts of the two main suspects in the case, Lu Xinjiang (also named Lu Liang) and Zhu Huanliang, are unknown, the court was told.

Seven people, including one accused of harboring a criminal, stood before the court this week.

According to the public prosecutors, from December 1998 to January 2001, Lu Liang raised the 5.4 billion yuan by signing cooperative agreements or entrusted financing management agreements with over 100 investors in the name of Zhongke Chuangye Investment Co. or Beijing Ke Wo Science & Technology Co.

The defendants were also accused of opening 1,500 shareholder accounts at more than 120 sales departments of securities corporations including Shanghai Lujiazhang and Zhongxing Trust & Investment Co. Through these accounts, they manipulated the price of the stock coded 0048.

The suspects held or controlled up to 56 million shares in 0048, or 55.36% of the total floating stocks, resulting in the tipping of the share's trading price and volume in their favor, said the prosecutor.

According to China's criminal law, manipulators of stock prices can be sentenced to up to five years in prison.

The trial of this case will continue.

## Main operator defends himself

The hearing opened this Tuesday morning with the four-hour cross-examination of the first defendant, Ding Fugen, who is considered a major player in the case.

## Ding's story about Lu, the stock manipulator

Ding told the court that he got to know Lu in 1995 while working at a futures company as an investment counselor. In March 1998, he began to work for Lu and then headed to Gansu province.

In Gansu, they set up the Mingyanyuan Investment Management Co. with Lu Liang as the company's legal representative, even though Lu still had 20 million yuan of outstanding debts from futures trading.

"Lu borrowed the one million yuan of registered capital for the company," Ding confessed, "and we used the company to apply for land to grow alfalfa. We got over 1,200 acres of land but the alfalfa project was a failure."

Then, Lu used this company to raise money. After purchasing the Kangda'er shares, Lu publicly released encouraging news about the alfalfa project, despite the fact that no alfalfa had ever been grown.

## Ups and downs of 0048 stock

Ding told the court that he learned about 0048 stock on January 20, 1999. At that time, the stock was named Kangda'er. "Lu had 2.77 million shares then. He said he expected to buy 30 million shares, or around 50%."

Ding later learned that Lu Liang and Zhu Huanliang signed an written agreement, according to which Lu was in charge of the primary market including the legal person and non-floating stocks while Zhu in charge of the secondary market including open trading and floating stocks.

Lu purchased his first 2.77 million 0048 shares at a price of 13 yuan each. By the end of April 1999, at which point he held 30 million shares, the price had risen to about 30 yuan.

"The stock went through two phases of drastic change," Ding said, "the first phase happened after May 19, 1999, when the stock's price rose from 17 to 48 yuan. The second phase occurred between January and February 2001, during which the price went from 40 yuan to 84 yuan. Then it began to fall."

"The price of a stock reflects the volume of shares put on the market by major shareholders," Ding added.

Ding told the court that Lu pushed the price of the share by buying into or acquiring other listed companies. He normally used the 0048 stock as collat-

eral in such transactions.

On Christmas day last year, Lu Liang and Zhu Huanliang had a falling out, after which Zhu sold tens of millions shares per day. The price of 0048 plummeted, falling 10% each day for 10 continuous days.

"The breaking of the financial link between Lu and Zhu, the high price of the stock and the expiration of some financing projects all caused the stock collapse," Ding said.

## Contradictions in Ding's testimony

After Zhongke Investment Co., Ltd. was established in July 1999, Ding's tasks included trading shares, contract and capital management.

He said Lu was in charge of planning and manipulation and he personally took care of stock transactions.

"Lu looks at it as a strategic investment and wanted to hold the shares for a long time. I didn't know he was manipulating the price. I didn't obtain any improper profits and I didn't know Lu was breaking the law," Ding added.

He later confessed, though, that his salary had risen from 3,000 yuan when he joined with Lu to 10,000 yuan before he was arrested, and Lu bought him a 750,000 yuan apartment.

At the end of the inquiry, Ding answered questions from the judge. Below are some excerpts:

Judge (J): How did Lu solve the problem of a lack of money?

Ding (D): He used the shares as collateral to make profits.

J: Who shouldered the risk?

D: Lu Liang.

J: What role did you play in the 0048 deal?

D: I played a certain part. I opened accounts, managed capital and contracts, and signed financing agreements.

J: Who controlled the 1,500 individual shareholder cards?

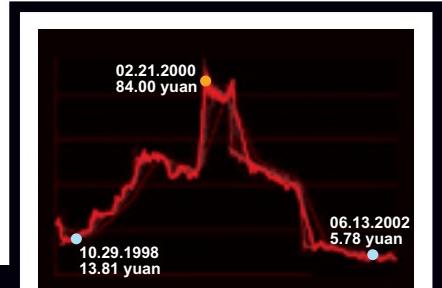
D: Lu Liang and his party. I also have some.

J: Was there any human influence on the rise of the share price?

D: Yes. Human control was the main factor.

J: Did Lu foresee the collapse of the 0048 stock?

D: He didn't talk about it with me.



The stock's code, 0048, and name, Zhongke Chuangye, have been changed to 000048 and ST Kangda'er.

## The 0048 Stock Roller Coaster

Lu Xinjian, 47, known as Lu Liang in the securities field, used to be a freelance writer and journalist. At the age of 40, Lu became a major trader in the stock market. As a key player in the "Zhongke shares" tragedy, he is called the super shareholder in China.

Another key player in the tragedy was Zhu Huanliang, a major shareholder based in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. Zhu controlled about 90% of the floating stocks in Kangda'er Corp.

◆ In November 1994, the Shenzhen Kangda'er (Group) Holding Corp., which engages in feed and chicken raising, was listed in the Shenzhen stock market.

◆ In late 1997, the "chicken flu" blow-up in Hongkong pushed Shenzhen Kangda'er to the brink of collapse. Its share price plummeted, which led to the freezing of hundreds of millions of yuan of Zhu's stock.

◆ In mid-1998, Zhu approached Lu to ask for his help in saving Kangda'er. The two men forged a "five-year strategic investment plan" to make long-term investments over three to five years and turn Kangda'er into a high-tech business. Lu was in charge of financing while Zhu led share trading.

◆ In late 1998, Kangda'er share price was around 17 yuan, but it rose continuously after Lu came on board.

◆ In July 1999, the price of Kangda'er shares rose from 36 yuan to 45 yuan and then stayed over 40 yuan, turning it into a "bull" share.

◆ In July 1999, run by Lu Liang, Zhongke Chuangye Investment Co., Ltd. was set up in Beijing with a registered investment of 30 million yuan.

◆ On December 8, 1999, the name Kangda'er changed to Shenzhen Zhongke Chuangye (Group) Holding Corp., which claimed publicly to have turned into a high-tech company.

◆ On December 13, 1999, the share code of Kangda'er A switched to Zhongke Chuangye and its price approached 80 yuan.

◆ By February 2000, the price has surpassed the 80 yuan mark.

◆ On December 25, 2000, Zhongke Chuangye's share value plummeted with the unexpected sale of more than 60 million shares. Over the next 10 trading days, Zhongke Chuangye fell 10% every day. The shares' market value took a dive worth 5 billion yuan.

◆ On January 1, 2001, six of the company's board members and two members of the board of management faxed their resignation letters to the board of directors of Zhongke Chuangye, leading to the collapse of the company's board of directors.

◆ On January 10, 2001, the CSRC announced it was conducting a probe into the Zhongke Chuangye collapse, adding that the crash of Zhongke Chuangye's share price was seriously disruptive to the stock market and that an investigative group had been set up.

◆ On January 11, 2001, after falling from 33.59 yuan to around 13 yuan, the price of Zhongke Chuangye's stock leveled off by which time the company had lost two thirds of its market value.

◆ In February 2001, the Ministry of Public Security and CSRC jointly established an investigative group, froze Zhongke Chuangye's assets and started questioning some individuals involved in this case.



More than 500 volumes of files have been collected in the complicated case.

Photos by Qu Liyan

# Unlocking the Door to the Future

By Zhu Lin

**I** might be the only graduate student among the locksmiths in Beijing," laughs Wang Chi. "And among the graduates, I might be the only one involved in the locksmith business." Wang, a graduate student of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, is the manager of Wangshi Locksmith Company.

Thirty-year-old Wang Chi comes from Heilongjiang Province and is a former TV reporter at Jinzhou Station, in the west of Liaoning Province. His Wangshi Locksmith Company is the only locksmith company registered with the Beijing Industrial and Commercial Bureau.

At present, the company is based temporarily in the basement of Xingye Hostel, where construction work is underway. The noise rarely lets up, and neither does the telephone, which rang more than 30 times during Wang's two-hour interview with *Beijing Today*.

## Surfing through different trades

Wang's grandfather was a locksmith, and his father took up the trade as a part-time job. Traditionally, a locksmith in China was always a street peddler. Wang often watched his father fixing various kinds of locks when he was a little boy, but never thought of becoming a locksmith himself.

Wang graduated from the Nanjing Science and Engineering University in 1995, majoring in armaments manufacture, but that line of work did not really appeal to him. He was assigned to a military industry company in Jinzhou after graduation, a state owned company that was sliding into bankruptcy.

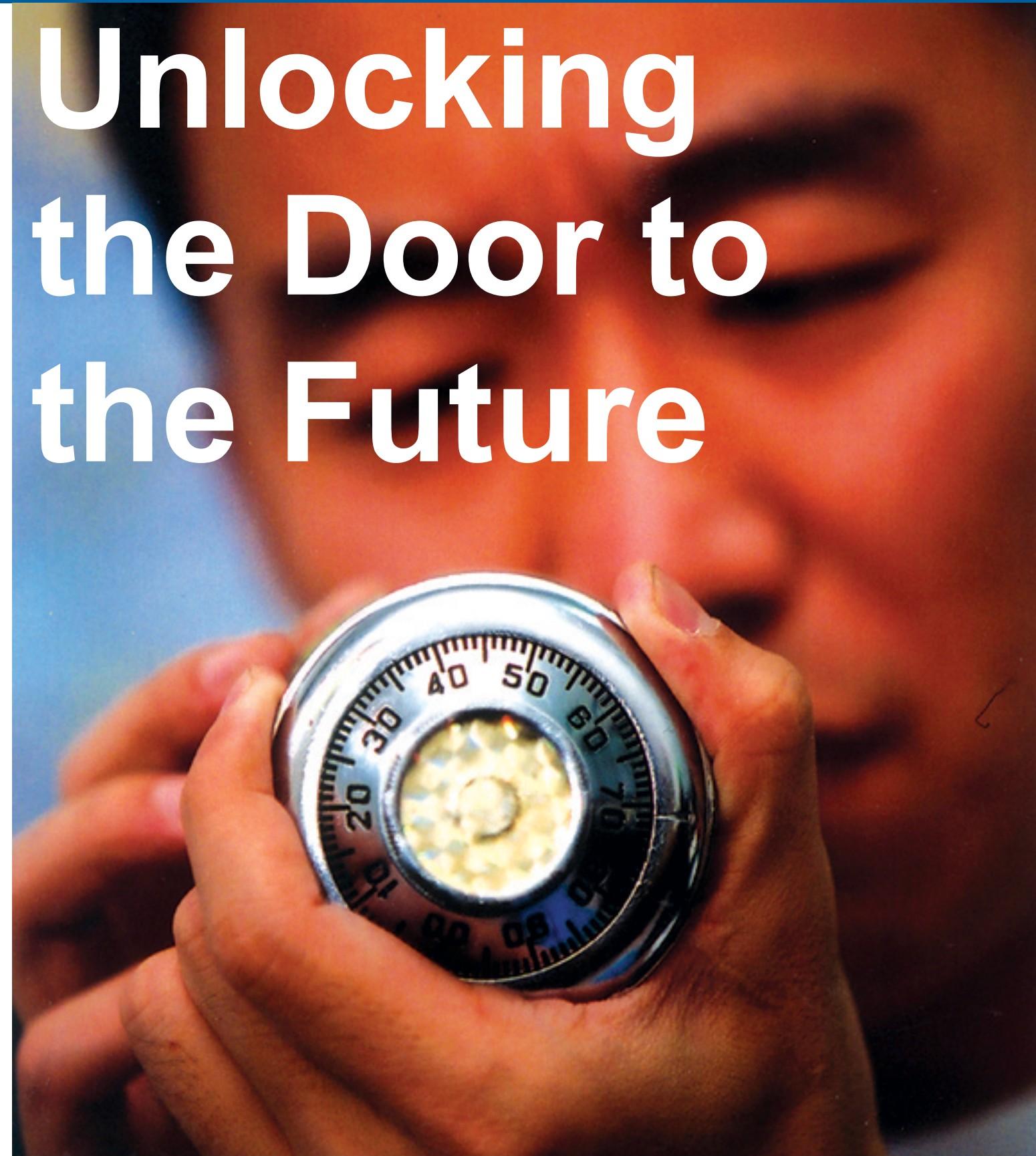
The policy of assigning college graduates to work units was soon to be discontinued, and Wang was one of those who rebelled against it. "Almost all of my classmates are working in military related industries now," he says.

He did not spend even one day working at the company, and tried instead to get a job at Jinzhou Port Co, with the help of his family. It was one of the most promising corporations in Liaoning Province, but he was still not satisfied, he says. "I felt that was not what I wanted to do."

## Stepping into media

At the end of 1996, Wang saw an advertisement for a job at Jinzhou TV Station. He decided to apply, despite having no background in the industry, and was eventually selected together with two others from a field of 300 candidates.

A major turning point in Wang's life came when his brother died in July 1999, the result of a sudden cerebral hemorrhage. "I was such a proud and self-centered man until I lost my big brother," he recalls. The family was shattered by



the tragic event, but it eventually proved to be the catalyst for the opening of the Wangshi Locksmith Company.

Two months after his brother's death, he started to prepare for the examination to enter the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, regarded as something of a holy grail by young people working in the media outside Beijing. "I was too sad to know I was sad. See, the leather belt I'm wearing was my brother's," he says, pointing at his waist, "Now I often see him in dreams."

## Locksmith business kicks off in cities

Wang's father opened a locksmith business in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province in 1999. But when his eldest son died, he was too broken-hearted to continue. He closed the business and went home.

Although only one year younger than his brother, Wang had little sense of family responsibility. After his brother died, however, he suddenly felt a strong need to take care of the family. "You can't just lie on your bed," he said to his father, "We have to stand up." He persuaded his



① Keys for every kind of lock  
② Locksmiths are always in demand  
③ One of Wang's employees at work  
④ On the way to a job  
⑤ Tools of the trade



Photos by Jackey

father to continue working to build up the locksmith company in that way.

In August 2000, Wang and his father investigated the locksmith market from Nanjing to Shanghai. They found the market had already reached saturation point, so they decided to open their business in Tangshan, a city in Hebei Province in the north of China. Wangshi Tangshan Locksmith Company opened in October, and according to Wang, it now holds 80% of the market share in that city.

Now Wangshi Locksmith has branches in five cities in China. At the Beijing Broadcasting Institute, 2002 was the year for students in Wang's grade to take an internship. He is using the time to establish the company in Beijing. "I learn what I need at school," he said, "And besides, I've worked at the Jinzhou TV station, so don't have to take an internship again."

For him, the locksmith company is not only a business to develop, it is also a family tie.

Wang and his father had considered setting up a branch in Beijing in 2000, but decided the administration of private business was too strict. "But now I don't think so," he says, proudly pointing to the qualification certificate issued by the Beijing Industrial and Commercial Bureau on April 26 this year.

The market is broader in Beijing, and the management is harder in such a big city. Now Wang has around 20 employees, all neighbors or relatives of his family. Each one has a fingerprint file, and they are not allowed to take their tools out after 10:00 pm if it is not for business. "Since the skill of a locksmith is a special technique concerning security, we keep our company as a family one," said Wang. Although people often call him seeking to learn the skill, he never agrees.

## Dangers and problems follow the career

Thieves and other criminals often seek to take advantage of locksmiths. Wang and his colleagues try their best to guard against such exploitation. Every

client must show his or her relevant papers. When the locksmith is working, clients must stay at least three meters away.

Wang tells the story of how one day, a young man who called himself a student asked the locksmith to open the lock for his bicycle. Wang felt he did not look like a student, and asked him to show his student identity card. The man said he had left it at home. Wang then asked for his telephone number, but when he tried it, it was a wrong number. "Why do you care so much? Do it, and I'll pay you!" the young man said. Wang refused, and the would-be client left, shouting abuse.

Around ten that night, a brick struck the window of his living room, followed by a second one, which shattered it. Wang and some friends rushed outside, but were unable to catch the culprit, who Wang recognized as the "student," from earlier in the day.

At the end of last year, Wang says he saw an exhibition about heroic deeds carried out by policemen in Shanghai. The exhibition included a photo of a young policeman, about his age. The policeman had tried to enter a crime scene. Unable to open the door, he attempted to climb into the apartment via the balcony, but fell and was killed. Wang says after seeing that, he felt professional locksmiths should cooperate with the police, as they could help reduce such risks.

Last year, his cousin helped police to open a window lock at a crime scene. As he was working, he dropped one of his tools, and bent to pick it up. Just at that moment, there was a gunshot, and a bullet came through the window. "You can help the police," Wang told his cousin, "But never go to such dangerous cases again!"

Wang says he is not afraid of competition, but he does not want to be beaten unfairly. The locksmith business in Beijing is not well regulated, and many people take advantage of the lack of guidelines. "There is one local company that teaches anyone willing to pay for how to open a lock," says Wang.

Wang and his colleagues study all the latest high-tech locks, especially code deciphering techniques. The first time his company tried to open a jammed ATM machine for the China Industrial Commercial Bank, it took three days, but the second time, it only took one.

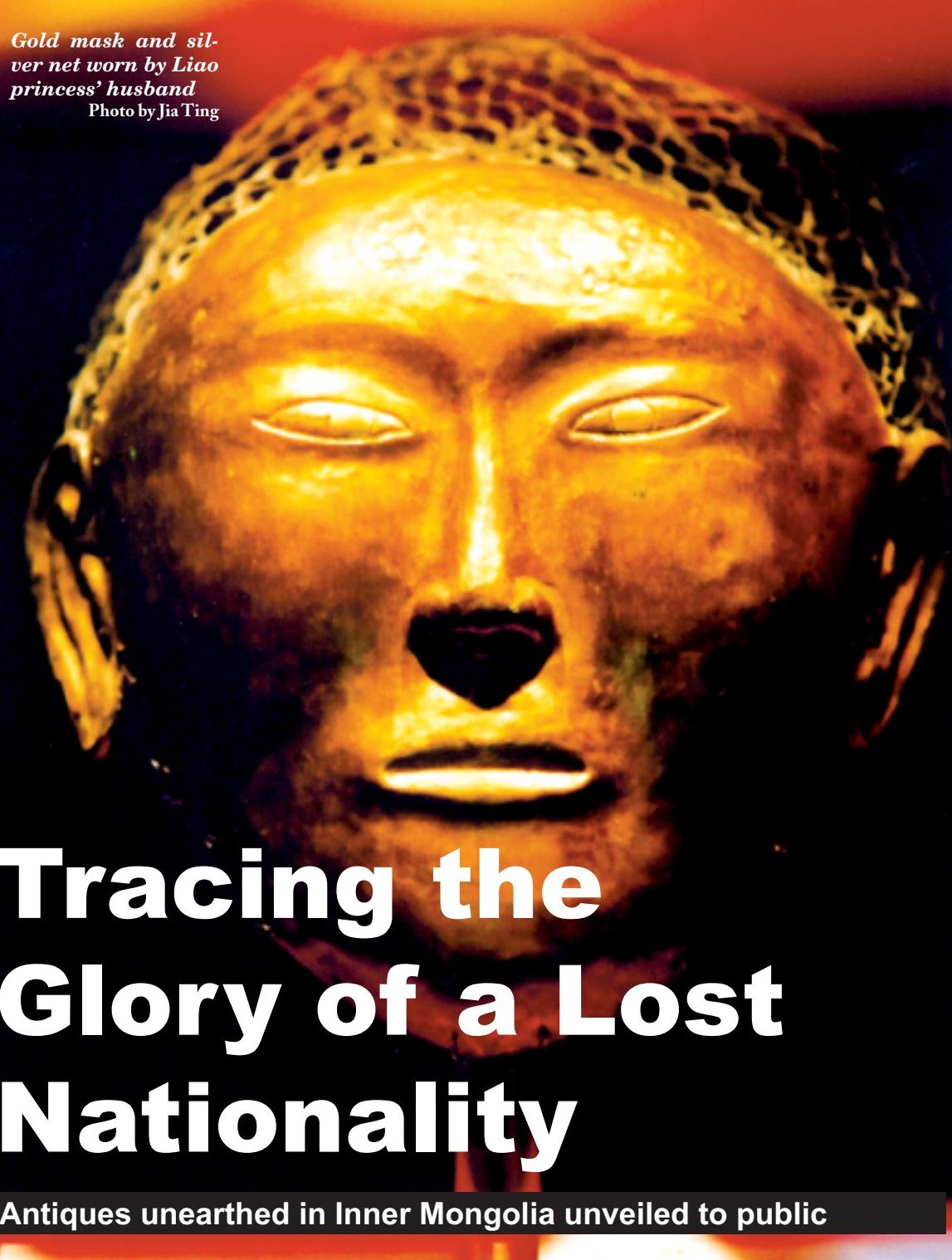
With the year flying past, Wang worries he will not be able to stay in the office all the time when classes begin again. He is also worried that more and more of his schoolmates and teachers will know about his business, and complain that he does not concentrate enough on study.

"People need to understand this career is far more than being a street peddler," he says. When Wang Chi helps others to open locks, he is also unlocking a door on the continuing road of his life.

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Gold mask and silver net worn by Liao princess' husband  
Photo by Jia Ting



## Tracing the Glory of a Lost Nationality

Antiques unearthed in Inner Mongolia unveiled to public

By Miao Yajie

**H**uge frescos depicting life over a thousand years ago, a reproduction of a wooden tomb, and scores of elaborate gold, silver, jade, lacquer and porcelain ware unearthed in Inner Mongolia are on show to the public for the first time at the National Museum of Chinese History. Standing before these exquisite objects of a millennium ago, the green carpet seems to turn to a land of grass, and the hearty laughter of the nomads seems to echo through the exhibition hall.

### A lost nationality

The Kingdom of Liao (916-1125) was established by the nomadic minority Qidan in north China. In the year 916, Yel Abaoji established a unified country called Da Qidan. In 947 the name of the kingdom was changed to Liao.

From the time of Emperor Taizong's reign, beginning in 927, Liao swallowed several neighbor-

ing states. In 1004, during the reign of Emperor Shenzong, the Liao army, headed by the emperor and his mother Empress Dowager Xiao, arrived at Tanzhou (now Puyang, Henan), threatening the Song capital, Kaifeng. The Song emperor was obliged to sign a peace treaty with Liao.

The power of Liao was then at its peak. The vast territory of the northern part of China was for the first time unified under one regime. In just 200 years, Liao had created a magnificent and profound culture, equal to that which existed in central China.

The later Mongolian rulers appraised the Liao laws and institutions as "grand." In Russian, China was called "Qidan," an indication of the deep impact Qidan culture had on the western countries.

When Liao was subjugated by the Jin in 1125, the state had existed for 209 years, ruled by nine emperors. After the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), historical records of the nomadic Qidan nationality dis-

appeared without a trace.

### Unique imperial burial customs

The exhibits on show at the museum are from archaeological discoveries made since the founding of New China, specifically, between 1954 and 2000. Relics from the tomb of the princess of the State of Chen and her husband, excavated at Naiman Banner, Inner Mongolia in 1986; from Yel Yuzhi's Tomb unearthed at Alukorqin Banner in 1992; and those recovered during the renovation of the Sakyamuni Sarira Stupa at Balin Right Banner during 1988-92, are of the highest archaeological, cultural, and artistic value.

The princess and her husband's tomb is the only known Qidan imperial tomb to have been preserved virtually intact, and contained abundant relics. The numerous burial objects found in the tomb are mostly made of precious materials with rare artistic value. Especially the two sets of burial costumes of the princess

and her husband. It is the first time the unique burial custom of the Qidan royal family has been disclosed to the world.

The two were buried in 1018, during the reign of Emperor Shenzong, when the Liao political, economic and cultural life was entering an era of prosperity and strength.

Found in the tomb were gold masks, silver pillows with gold floral decorations, silver thread woven costumes, silver boots with gold floral decorations, an amber necklace, a gilt silver crown, and various ornaments made of gold, silver, jade, pearl, agate, and amber. The treasure is an important resource for research on the Qidan society.

Others antiques such as the porcelain and gold and silver ware found in Yel Yuzhi's tomb embodied either the typical nomadic characteristics, the impact of the exotic culture, or the integration of Tang Dynasty culture and the Liao culture. The over 100 miniature stupas with Buddhist scriptures inside found during the renovation project was also of great research value.

### Re-discovering the nationality on horseback

Since later dynasties kept only a few inaccurate records on the Liao kingdom, many people know of the nomadic nationality only from the popular story *The Yang Family Generals* (Yang Jia Jiang) describing a loyal and righteous family of the Song Dynasty, who fought many times with the Liao invaders.

After establishing their country, the Qidan rulers set about creating a written language of their own, known as "big letter and small character of Qidan" (契丹大小字), which was used alongside Chinese. Today, however, scholars can only decipher part of the small characters. Thus much of the available sources to understanding Qidan culture cannot be read.

The common misunderstanding about the Qidan people is that they only knew pasture and hunting. After one-year's preparation for a special exhibition at the history museum, organizers say that the 204 exhibits will provide an invaluable supplement and correct many misunderstandings about the nationality on horseback that was so courageous and skillful in battle, yet created a highly developed culture.

The exhibition not only tells the story of a lost nationality, but shows an important part of the history of China.

**When:** till October 10

**Where:** National Museum of Chinese History (west side of Tian'anmen Square)

## Beijing Planned According to the Five Elements

By Wang Yuan / Miao Yajie

**T**he old theory that Beijing was built according to a five-directional plan has recently been demonstrated to be true. This represents an important achievement in folk culture research.

The five-directional theory derives from a geographical concept held by the ancient Chinese. Namely, heaven is round and the earth is square, and the earth has five directions — east, west, south, north, and center. The five directions each have a corresponding element: metal goes with west, wood with east, water with north, fire with south and earth with the center, following the order of the five heavenly stems, and so protecting the city from the five directions.

The five-direction theory can be traced back to the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Li Jianping, general secretary of the Research Institute of the History of Beijing, says the construction of Beijing complied with the five-direction theory. As long as the common people believed in the theory, the rulers of the dynasties used it as proof of their divinely conferred power by pointing out relevant objects. They used geomancy (feng shui) in the same way.

There were a number of different versions of the five-direction theory, but from the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1736-1795), one version came to be widely accepted. Stories related to this were mostly passed down orally, and some have long been forgotten. After examining the historical records and conducting field research, scholars have determined the following results.

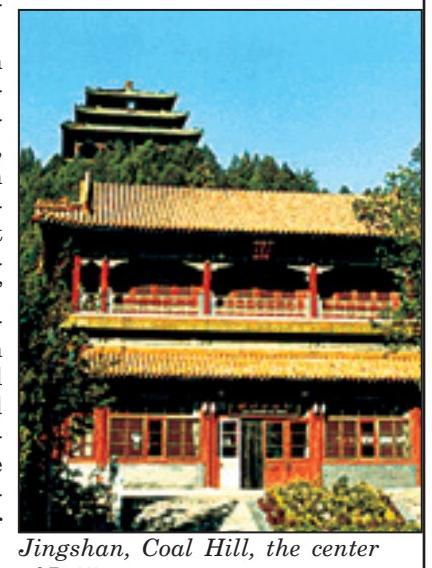
East and wood (东方甲乙木), corresponds with a divine section of *nanmu* wood that was kept in the imperial lumber yard. After the Forbidden City was completed in 1420, it was left as the "guard" of the east. Today, a stone tablet bearing an inscription praising the divine wood by Emperor Qianlong still stands at Number Six Beijing Piano Factory, Humuchang, on the East Third Ring Road.

West and metal (西方庚辛金) corresponds with the Yongle bell, at Dazhongsi (the Big Bell Temple). The casting of the bell was one of the major events after the Ming Dynasty moved its capital from Nanjing to Beijing in 1421. The bell, a key symbol of imperial power, has been moved several times, but it was always located in the west of Beijing.

South and fire (南方丙丁火) corresponds with Haotian pagoda, located in the south of Beijing. The red color of the earth and stone of this area was symbolic of fire.

North and water (北方壬癸水) corresponds with Kunming Lake in the Summer Place. Kunming Lake was an important water resource in the imperial garden, and a water supply for imperial use.

Center and earth (中央戊己土) corresponds with Jingshan, or Coal Hill, behind the Forbidden City. Jingshan, an artificial hill, was built during the Ming Dynasty as a "guard" for the Imperial Palace. It was made from the earth excavated for the moat around the palace and Nanhai (the lake to the south of Beihai). Jingshan was the center of Beijing.



Jingshan, Coal Hill, the center of Beijing.

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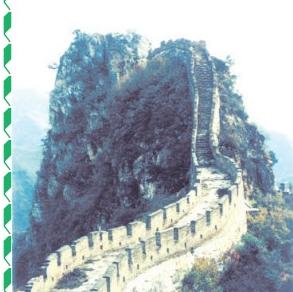
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## Symbolic Language of China

### A New Path for Traditional Art

By Zhao Pu

**Z**he Ya unveiled his adventurous attempt to create a new formal language of painting, as a carrier of traditional Chinese culture, in his just concluded exhibition *Symbol of China*.

The young artist presented 17 paintings at his solo show at the New Millennium Art Gallery. The paintings show a distinctive but harmonious style, utilizing traditional Chinese ink painting on *Xuan* paper. The predominant color is black, with conspicuous touches of red in each piece. While the scenes are abstract symbols and forms rather than the usual scenery and figures of traditional Chinese ink painting, the spirit and thought both carried and inspired by the paintings are generated from the same culture as the ink and paper.

The paintings in Zhe Ya's *Symbol of China* derive from Chinese culture, and at the same time, surpass its tradition. He has found a unique language form in art that separates him

from most other contemporary artists," commented Chen Zhang, director of Fang Guang Culture and Art Development, the organizer of the exhibition.

Zhe says his attempt to create a new path in his art originated from his cultural ideal. "Traditional Chinese art and culture have been squeezed by western art in the past century," says Zhe. "It took me a rather long time to figure out the reason. That is to some extent, the 'language' of Chinese art is too particular in comparison with western art, that's why it couldn't be fully appreciated by westerners so far." He thus started exploration for a language form that is rooted in traditional Chinese culture and can be understood universally.

Zhe has been practicing oil painting for 14 years. In 1999, the time he found the answer to his "cultural ideal", Zhe dropped his paints and picked up ink. He says when he completed the first work of his *Symbol of China* series, he felt he had happened upon a treasure trove. During the day

he put down his inspirations in paintings, piece by piece; at night he read books on Chinese classical philosophy and literature, producing several hundred works in the past three years.

Zhe's works bear traces of Daoism. He attempts to express the spirit of purification and regression in his paintings. According to Chen Zhang, "With Chinese painting materials, and through a few simple lines and lumps in black and red, the artist creates an abstract poetic visual space of purification."

There is a little splash of red in every work in the *Symbol of China* show. "It's a kind of warning and reminder, I wish to inspire viewer's thinking by using a single red line or lump in my painting," says Zhe. None of the paintings are titled; each one is simply marked *Symbol of China* and dated. "I don't want to limit viewer's imagination by titling my paintings. Abstract art should leave more space for people to imagine freely."

## First Cartoon Festival for Local Colleges

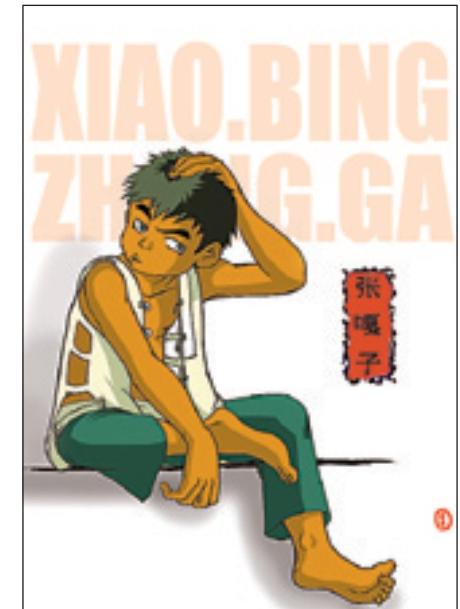
By Zhang Huan

The Animation School of the Beijing Film Academy held the first College Animated Cartoons and Comics Festival last month, involving more than 30 college comic clubs. But for Sun Lijun, vice president of the Animation School, the event was primarily a preparation for next year's festival.

This year's festival is aimed at raising the standard of the creation of animated cartoons and comics, and providing an opportunity for comic lovers to exchange ideas. Over 700 comics and dozens of animated cartoons from college students were exhibited at the festival. The student creations, of varying standards, suggest a trend toward internationalization, though Sun says there are no mature works among them.

"The first festival is an experiment. We are trying to find a way to industrialize the creation of animated cartoons and comics. Next year, we will have a large-scale festival involving a thousand colleges and including a wider variety of activities. Our hope is it will become a brand for college students, like the China Film Festival," he said.

Sun also disclosed that the Youth Film Studio, an independent studio set up by the academy, was working on an animated film *Zhang Ga, the Young Soldier* adapted from the popular children's film of the same name. Sun is the director of the movie, which represents another attempt to open up the market for Chinese animated films. *Zhang Ga, the Young Soldier* boasts the largest production crew in Chinese animation history, and bears a fresh and realistic style, according to Sun. He believes that through the studio's efforts, the film will attract not only children, but also their parents and grandparents to come to the cinema.



*Zhang Ga, the Young Soldier* boasts the largest production crew in Chinese animation history.

## Zhe Ya's Portrait

Born in December 1968, Shanxi Province.

Grew up in Inner Mongolia.

Worked as a shepherd, a teacher, and held various part-time jobs.

Dreamed of becoming a writer in childhood; discovered a crush on painting by chance.

Reluctant to be a mediocre artist; unwilling to follow suit.

Swam upstream in the tide of art.

After hard research and exploration in the field of traditional culture and art, established own language system on the base of traditional art.

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By Zhu Lin

The reflection of the World Trade Center can still be seen in Spiderman's eyes, according to Spiderman special effects supervisor John Dykstra. The latest blockbuster movie based on a comic book superhero is due to open in Beijing cinemas in July. *Beijing Today* spoke with Dykstra over the phone about the making of the movie.

The trailer for *Spiderman* was made before the movie was finished, and included a scene where Spiderman swings from the World Trade Center. After September 11, the filmmakers removed that part from the trailer because the sight of it was painful to many people. "But in the movie, we did not take the World Trade Center out. The twin towers are in three or four shots," said Dykstra. "And they are still reflected in Spiderman's eyes."

Dykstra emphasized that the movie was about the spirit of the people in New York. On the September 11 terrorist attack, he

# Spiderman Set to Swing

said, "I think the fact that the movie was punctuated by the event emphasized that spirit again and was simply a stronger statement."

*Spiderman*, which cost over \$100 million and took two years to complete, has already grossed \$300 million in the US.

Some local media says its success has a lot to do with American people's longing for a "superhero" in the wake of September 11.

On such talks, Dykstra said, "To me, the center of a superhero is his capability of healing. He doesn't take risks for risks' sake, or for proving a point. He takes risks because he knows he must try. Even if he fails, he can heal and try again."

That is

The twin towers, seen reflected in Spiderman's eyes had disappeared from the New York landscape by the time the movie opened there



the idea behind the character of Peter Parker, who as a high school student is bitten by a genetically altered spider, leading to his transformation into Spiderman. "He doesn't know who he is, but he feels his responsibility is to do the right thing. I think that's about goodness. So maybe people expect goodness," said Dykstra, "In that way, I support the idea that there is a superhero."

In the movie, Peter Parker has to learn how to become Spiderman, and he makes some mistakes along the way. "We, the filmmakers were very much like Spiderman. We learned over the course of the project, and the learning experience was as much of an enjoyment as the final product, as far as we were concerned," said Dykstra.

Born in 1942, John Dykstra has worked on such milestone movies as *Star Wars IV*, *Stewart Little* and *Batman*. He is currently preparing to shoot the Spiderman sequel.

## "Only the Dead Can Speak Out What the Living Want to Say!"

By Ye He

*The Suicide* is perhaps an unusual choice for a graduation performance. The play, a biting satire by Russian playwright Nikolai Erdmann, is being staged from June 5 to 16 by students from the Central Academy of Drama.

Director Wang Xiaofan said the sensitivity the work shows was the main reason for him to choose it. "Even before Stalin's purges from 1936 to 1938, the writer had already sensed the contradiction between the collective and the individual in the 1920s," he said.

The hero decides that he wants to commit suicide, and word of his decision spreads among his neighbors. A steady stream of people come to persuade him that he should die in the name of their particular pet cause, however, the more



Photo by Zhang Hong

they push him, the more he senses the pleasure of living.

Written in 1928, the play was banned for "slandering the Soviet reality," and remained blacklisted until 1987, when Gorbachev's perestroika finally allowed theatres to pull it out of the archives. Since then, it has become the fourth most performed play in Russia. As one of the play's characters states, "Only the dead can speak out what the living want to say from heart."

Since last year, there have been an increasing number of full-length dramas performed on Beijing's stages, such as *Death and Maiden* and *The Crucible*. "I don't think it's very hard to keep such works on Beijing's stages," said Wang, "there must be several directors who feel a necessity to do this."

When: June 5 to June 16, 7:30 p.m.

Where: China Youth Art Theatre

## French Soprano and Pianist Together in Beijing

By Ye He

French soprano Marie Devellereau will perform at the Forbidden City Concert Hall with the pianist Philippe Cassard on June 18.

One of the most active French sopranos today, Devellereau was born in 1971. Her performance at the National Opera of Paris conducted by Seiji Ozawa in 2000 brought her instant acclaim. Her program in Beijing includes arias by Bizet, Faure, Lalo, Franck and Widor.

French pianist Philippe Cassard has an "exceptional ear for color and nuance," according to the *Ottawa Citizen*. He is described as one of the leading interpreters of Debussy. At the concert, he will play pieces by Liszt, and Rachmaninov.



Marie Devellereau

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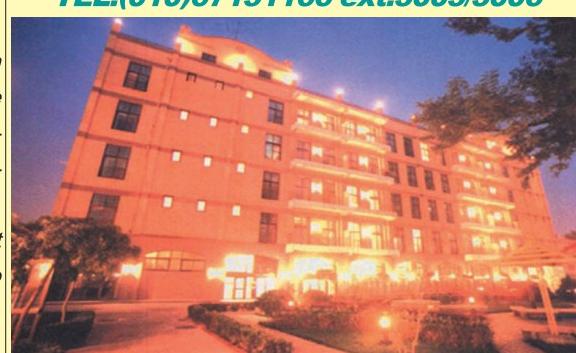
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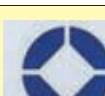
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## New Bars

## One Bar Stands Out



**By Lydia**  
Possibly the smallest and most heavily decorated bar in the Sanlitun area opened on May 29 with a big hanging over its door. The owner, Mai Zi (麦子), a published poet and writer, painter, performance artist, musician and songwriter, has tried to cram as much art as possible into the ten-square meter joint. Several of Mai Zi's paintings, some worth \$1,000-5,000, adorn the walls and candles in all shapes, sizes, colors and aromas priced at 2-50 yuan ring the wall. The bar's ceiling, walls, tables, chairs and facade are all painted in rich colors. "I speak through them to the public, from my deep soul," said Mai Zi.

Each week, he shows two or three documentaries on contemporary Chinese or foreign performance artists on a big screen. Mai Zi also runs his own 45-minute film, "After the World", which he both directed and acted in the lead role.

Chris Laidlaw, a 19-year-old American and an acquaintance of Mai Zi's, said, "I came by one day and saw Mai Zi painting the outside of the bar. He's a very gifted and kind guy." Laidlaw and his indie rock band, Samurai-X, will put on weekly shows at the bar.

**Add:** 1 Bar, opposite Sushi-Ya, Sanlitun South Bar Street, Chaoyang District. **Price:** 8 yuan / 1 bottle of Tsingtao, mixed drinks 15-25 yuan. **Open:** 3pm-midnight. **Tel:** 6595-6650.

## TWENTY SAME THINGS HAVE NEW HANGOUT

**By Lydia**

Several young people, including an artist, a singer, an actor and an IT worker, opened this new addition to Sanlitun South Bar Street on May 26. The bar's name, Born in 70's, says more about its clientele than its decor or music.

"When these kind of people get together, share the joys and sorrows of life and sympathize with each other, we feel happy and successful. This is their home," said Tang.

The bar also welcomes foreigners interested in Chinese culture, especially other products of the 70's and anyone looking for a quiet place to have a drink and chat.

**Add:** Born in 70's, between Huxley's and Azucar, Sanlitun South Bar Street, Chaoyang District. **Price:** Tsingtao beer 10 yuan, other beers 15-25 yuan. **Open:** daily, 6pm-midnight. **Tel:** 6500-1250.

were born at the end of or after the Cultural Revolution and spent their childhood in the factories in which their parents worked. Their parents lost their youth to the revolution, and turned around to have very high expectations of their children.

"When these kind of people get together, share the joys and sorrows of life and sympathize with each other, we feel happy and successful. This is their home," said Tang.

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## Indulge at Kempi Deli

**By Salinda**

Here's great news for chocoholics. On May 28, the Kempinski Hotel launched an extended Valrhona chocolate celebration, at which pastry chefs craft exceptional chocolates fit for the most discriminating of gourmets. "Valrhona is the creator of 'Grands Crus' chocolate," said Peter Schaumburg, administrative head chef, "and we are going to hold the chocolate celebration for about six months in the Kempi Deli."

In the deli's window display, magnificent boxes and coffrets containing Valrhona's Gaud Cru chocolate squares, bars, almonds and hazelnuts coated in dark chocolate, milk chocolate, or Gianduia stand out.

"Valrhona is the first chocolatier to offer a dark bitter chocolate with a 70% cocoa content. Guanaja is used primarily by chefs as a dark chocolate couverture, but is also produced in small tasting squares suitable for serving with coffee in the world's finest establishments" added Schaumburg.

Kempi Deli offers far more than chocolate to appeal to gourmets. The restaurant specializes in authentic Western-style cakes and breads. Kempi Deli is a great place to enjoy a Western treat or feed that chocolate craving.

**Add:** 1F, Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 7am-11pm.

**Tip:** Breakfast delivery service available. **Tel:** 6465-3388.



Photos by Li Shuzhuan

## Riding the Freedom Horse

**By Miao Yajie**

Liu Hongying says she opened her store as a means of pinning ideas culled from years of adventures in one place and conveying them to all sorts of other people. Born in the year of horse, Hongying designed her first canvas bag under the brand name "Freedom Horse" in 1995 because she couldn't find a bag she really wanted to carry on her travels.

Today, the days of doing everything herself are just a memory. The Freedom Horse range of products has expanded to cover home decorations in cloth, glass and porcelain and caps and leisure wear made from natural fabrics such as cotton and linen.

An introduction to her flagship store next to the Shuang-an Shopping Center, run in the May issue of the literature magazine Book City, said that the red Freedom Horse logo has clearly found a place in the market since another branch has opened just a three minute walk away near Renmin University.

The newly-opened fourth Free Horse store at Gongzhufen was designed by the artist Ai Weiwei. Liu said she learned a lot from his design, in terms of how to fully utilize space, what materials best suit her brand's style, and how details can make a store more comfortable.

Liu's travels are a clear source of inspiration, evident, for example, in her choice of colors. After gazing at the alpine lakes of Tibet,



Photo by Miao Yajie

she came to love bright blue, which crops up frequently in her products. A trip to India left her with great affection for pure, bright yellow. She said, "I don't have a favorite color anymore, every color is beautiful and harmony is the key. If a dress' colors match harmoniously, it will look great."

After a nearly one-month trip to India during this Spring Festival, colorful hand-made covers for beds, sofas and cushions appeared in Liu's stores. "It's not easy to do business in India," she said, sitting on an Indian sofa sheet. "But I love these hand-made fabrics so much, I bought samples for myself and also to sell."

## Free Horse Flagship Store

**Add:** 1F, 48 Beisanhuan Xilu, west of Shuang'an Shopping Center. **Open:** 9:30am-9:30pm. **Tel:** 6216-1586.

## Free Horse Gongzhufen Store

**Add:** 24\west building, 19 Xisanhuan Zhonglu, Haidian District. **Open:** 9am-9pm. **Tel:** 6398-7623.

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# Loan Holders Win through Early Payment

By Wang Dandan

Starting in May, eight banks in Shanghai will impose fees as penalties on customers who complete payment of their mortgages before contracted dates. The eight banks are the Shanghai branches of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Agriculture Bank of China, Bank of China, China Construction Bank, China Transportation Bank, China Merchant Bank, China Everbright Bank and the Bank of Shanghai.

## Will Beijing banks charge similar penalties?

According to several banks in Beijing, no moves have been made to impose fees on Beijing mortgage holders who pay off their loans before the set date.

People planning to pay off their loans in advance should apply to their banks for permission to do so several days before making final payments. Different banks have different regulations for when such applications should be filed. If a bank agrees, both sides should sign a contract for when and how the loans will be paid.

There are two ways to pay off mortgages in advance: one is to shrink the duration of the loan while increasing monthly payments, and the other is to pay off a large proportion of the loan, such as one quarter, but maintain the contracted interest rate.

## How much interest can be saved by paying in advance?

This applies to people who want to pay off a significant part of their loans to a bank. As an example, Mr. Buy takes out a loan for 260,000 yuan with a duration of ten years from a bank, with monthly payments of 2,800 yuan. Mr. Buy decides to pay 100,000 yuan in advance to the bank. After his application is approved, he changes his loan contract with the bank, reducing his monthly pay-



ment to 1,600 yuan. As a result, he saves around 30,000 yuan.

Paying off loans in advance can save money by cutting the amount of interest paid, said Tang Jianwei, an employee at the Bank of China. It is best to make advance payments in the first years of a loan, according to Tang, because the more that is paid early, the less interest one has to pay later.

## Shorten loan durations while maintaining interest rates

Another way to pay off the loans early is to shorten their durations. Let's say Mr. Buy takes out a ten-year loan from the Construction Bank of China, and a year later, wants to shorten the loan's duration to five years. He has to sign a new contract with the bank after his application is approved. However, even though the duration is reduced, the interest rate is same as that for the ten-year loan.

## Procedures for paying off loans in advance

1. Pay off the remaining balance on a loan

Banks usually require customers to inform them one or two

months in advance so they can calculate how much customers should pay. The bank will then inform a customer when to pay their loans, send the customer's property right certificate to a lawyer and register with the real estate bureau, and then cancel its original contract with the customer. When those steps are completed and a loan is completely paid off, the customer receives his/her property right certificate and all contracts with the banks are terminated.

2. Mortgage-holders sell their apartments and terminate their contracts

When a mortgage holder and a buyer sign a contract for the purchase of an apartment, a lawyer will ask the loan holder's bank about how much the original owner of the apartment still owes and then transfer the responsibility for that debt to the new owner of the apartment.

3. A customer cancels a contract with one bank and starts to cooperate with another bank

If a customer cancels his/her contract with bank A and starts to cooperate with bank B, the procedures are the same as for no.

2 above, the only difference being that bank B will pay the remainder of the customer's loan, not the next buyer of the apartment.

## More people are looking to pay off their loans in advance

According to ICBC Beijing branch, 1/3 of mortgage customers pay off their loans in advance, among whom, 50 percent pay off their entire loans at one time. Most people are reluctant to pay off housing loans before a building is completed. They are more likely to pay off their loans after moving into their new apartments.

## Banks lose

From a legal point of view, paying off a mortgage in advance is a breach of a loan-holder's contract with a bank. Moreover, completing payment early can cause banks to lose money.

Some people mistakenly believe that banks only lose money when loan customers fail to pay back their loans. Banks receive less interest from loans paid off in advance, and also receive sudden large payments, which they cannot turn around and loan out again.

# Registration Procedures Simplified

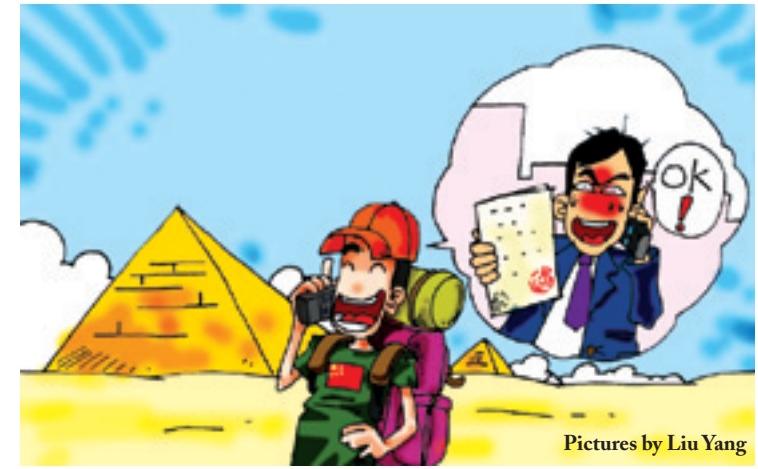
By Wang Dandan

A recent notice published by Beijing Real Estate Bureau stipulating the procedures for registration of apartments with real estate bureaus states that starting June 15, developers will be responsible for the registration of apartments.

In the past, apartment buyers and developers had to go through all registration procedures together. The notice also regulates that the registration period should be no longer than five working days.

According to the notice, a developer should go to the relevant real estate bureau within 30 days of signing a contract with a buyer. Before the notice, registration was a source of great frustration, as apartment buyers often had to take time from work to deal with the procedures, or entrust others to go through the procedures for them.

After the publication of the notice, a buyer only has to provide relevant documents to a developer to register. This is intended to save people time and raise work efficiency. As promised, all the real estate bureaus, at city or district level, will finish the registration process within five working days.



Pictures by Liu Yang

# Three Billion Pouring into Beijing Business Park

By Wang Dandan

Zhongguancun Science Park and Beijing DDC Digital Company will invest 3 billion yuan in the next three years to build the first Beijing Business Park in Fengtai Park, Zhongguancun Science Park.

Wang Hong, director of Fengtai park, says the business park will cover a total area of over 1 million square meters. The first phase will have an area of 650,000 square meters, and the whole project is expected to be completed within three years.

A business park is a community, usually located in the suburbs of a city, that has all necessary facilities such as apartment buildings, department stores, schools and recreation centers. Companies and factories are also part of the community. Because there is so much at community residents' disposal, they rarely have to head downtown.

The apartment buildings in the business park are mostly planned to be four to six stories tall, with individual entrances and building codes.



# Price Cut Shakes up Market

By Wang Dandan

Pengrun Garden in southwest Beijing is the first housing development in the city to drop its sale price by 20%, from 6,900 yuan to 5,500 yuan per square meter. Since the lowered price was put into effect several days ago, over 60 of the 150 vacant apartments in the complex have been sold, according to Zhang Zhiqian, sales manager of Pengrun Garden, and over 100 people have signed purchasing agreements.

## Purchasing agreements have legal backing

Considering the complexity of the procedures involved in buying an apartment, both the buyer and the developer have to be restricted by some documents through which the developer guarantees the given apartment will not be sold to someone else and the buyer affirms his/her intent.

Purchasing agreements can serve as legal documents guaranteeing these promises while the deposit is considered a sign of sincerity.

However, from a legal point of view, a purchasing agreement is not a legal promise for the purchase of an apartment and does not mean a contract must be signed.

By paying a deposit, a buyer shows he or she is interested in buying an agreement, but is not legally bound to do so.

**Traps in purchasing agreements**

Many apartment buyers feel that after they sign a purchas-

Zhang, however, explains the move as the result of reconsideration of the price and as a move to get a return on investment as quickly as possible. "Although our profits have decreased, our sales have accelerated," he added.

The price reduction has met with differing responses. Gu Yunchang, secretary general of the China Real Estate Association, said that the developer reduced the price on its own, indicating that price wars will be inevitable in the future in Beijing's real estate market.

Other developers say that such price cuts will hurt owners who bought their apartments at the higher original prices.

Buyers think the developer is running damage control from the beating incident and its impact on the developer's reputation. Regardless of their motives, Pengrun has emerged as the first apartment complex to slash its prices and whether this will lead to a price war in Beijing's real estate market remains to be seen. Beijing Today will follow this story in following issues.

# Real Estate Round-up

By Wang Dandan

Sales of properties in nine new developments, two foreign-approved residence complexes, two top-level apartment buildings, three common apartment buildings, one villa area, and one commercial and living complex, started last month. Most of these buildings are located along the south Third Ring Road and Fourth Ring Road, and have an average price of 4,000 - 6,000 yuan per square meter.

## Project: Jinbaoshun Villa

**Location:** Mapo County, Shunyi district

**Average price:** 7,500 yuan per square meter

**Type:** villa

**Tel:** 69405088/5006

## Project: Laiyin Hepan

**Location:** Xihuan Beilu, Beijing Economic and Development Zone

**Average price:** 4,300 yuan per square meter

**Type:** foreign-approved apartments

**Tel:** 67871167/68/69

## Project: Licheng Baili

**Location:** Tianbao Xilu, Beijing Economic and Development Zone

**Average price:** 4,200 yuan per square meter

**Type:** foreign-approved apartments

**Tel:** 67888991/92

## Project: Geng Tianxia

**Location:** 3 Xidajie, Yongdingmen, Xuanwu district

**Average price:** 9,500

yuan per square meter

**Type:** top-level apartments

**Tel:** 63168288/99

## Project: Qinglinyuan

**Location:** Miwa village, Haidian district

**Average price:** 6,280 yuan per square meter

**Type:** top-level apartments

**Tel:** 62918899

## Project: Dingheng Xinxing

**Location:** 28 Fengbeilu, Fengtai district

**Average price:** 5,000 yuan per square meter

**Type:** commercial and living apartments

**Tel:** 63841406/1426

## Project: Future Town

**Location:** 500m south from Huaxiangqiao, South Fourth Ring Road, Fengtai district

**Average price:** 4,080 yuan per square meter

**Type:** apartments

**Tel:** 63792666/3666/4666

## Project: Borun Garden

**Location:** Lugudajie, Shijingshan

**Average price:** 4,000 yuan per square meter

**Type:** apartments

**Tel:** 68630555/777

## Project: Great Nature Town

**Location:** Hancunhe town, Fangshan district

**Average price:** 1,791 yuan per square meter

**Type:** apartments

**Tel:** 80384577/8/9



Legal Aid

ing agreement, they have to accept some unfair rules in the final contract.

The source of this feeling is simple - it is the line in agreements that reads, "if the buyer doesn't sign the contract with the developer within the written date, the developer will not return the buyer's deposit."

In fact, this is a trap. Developers are required to return deposits if the two sides cannot reach a final agreement.

## Dealing with deposits after agreements are signed

1. If a buyer doesn't sign a contract before the written date when there are no disputes, the developer is entitled to keep the deposit.

If a developer sells an apartment promised to a buyer to someone else, leading to the failure to sign a contract, the developer should return twice the sum of the deposit to the buyer.

2. If both sides sign a contract within the written date, the deposit will be included in the payment for an apartment.

3. If both sides disagree on the contract, the developer should return the buyer's deposit.

4. If a buyer side disagrees on some items in an agreement such as price, location or area, if it is the buyer, he or she will not have their deposit returned.

If it is the developer who disagrees with some items in an agreement, the developer should return twice the sum of the deposit to the buyer.

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**Performances****The 50th Anniversary of Beijing People's Art Theatre**

The theater will hold a series of events to celebrate its 50's anniversary. Programs include Thunderstorm, from June 12 to June 16, Cai Wenji, from June 19 to June 23, Tea House, from June 26 to June 30, The First Intimate Contact, from June 18 to June 22. **Where:** 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Beijing People's Art Theatre. **Admission:** 10-40 yuan. **Tel:** 6588-6448 ext.655



The First Intimate Contact

**Peking Opera**

*Havoc in Heaven*, *Meeting at the Broken Bridge*, *The Crossroads*, *Manor Hu*, *Picking up a Jade Bracelet*. By Beijing Fenglei Peking Opera Troupe. **Where:** Huguang Guild Hall, 3 Hufanglu, Xuanwu District. **When:** June 14-21, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 100-180 yuan, 200, 380 yuan box. **Tel:** 6351-8284, 6352-9134.

Famous Beijing Opera artists such as Zhang Xuejin, Li Yufu and Sun Lumin will perform from June 14 to June 16 at Chang'an Grand Theatre. Other artists like Zhao Baoxiu, Ma Zhengshou, Huang Dehua, Chang Qiuyue will also give excellent Beijing Opera performances. **When:** June 14-16, 7:30pm. **Add:** 7 Jiannei Dajie, Chang'an Grand Theatre. **Tel:** 6510-1309.

**Food****Summer Fruit Delights**

Dishes made with fresh fruit including shredded chicken with seasonal fruit, deep-fried prawn with mayonnaise and mixed fruit, sautéed scallop with fresh fruit, baked pork chop with strawberry, baked fillet steak and mango in bird's nest. **Where:** Dynasty Restaurant, 4F Jingguang New World Hotel. **Tel:** 6597-8888 ext. 2599.

**Chaozhou Food Promotion**

A Cantonese chef brings you dishes from Shantou, in the southwest of Guangdong Province. Boiled cod, marinated sliced goose, marinated goose head, marinated pork intestines, preserved vegetables.

**All You Can Eat Dinner**

Every Sat and Sun from 5:30 to 9:30pm, for 40 yuan you can help yourself to the a la carte menu, including drinks, dishes, dim sum, soup, noodles, dumplings and dessert. **Where:** Food Street, -1F, Jingguang New World Hotel. **When:** till June 30. **Tel:** 6597-8888 ext. 2534.

**Bagou Buyi Restaurant**

Sichuan artists to perform every Saturday and Sunday from May 30 to June 30. During the World Cup, many activities will be held to celebrate the event. Lucky men will also be selected to get daily presents. **When:** 11am-2pm, 5:30-10pm. **Add:** 21 Block 4, Fangqunyuan, Fengtai District. **Tel:** 6767-8666.

**Weather**

Friday June 14	Cloudy to overcast, shower Max: 31C. Min: 19C.
Saturday June 15	Clear to cloudy Max: 33C. Min: 20C.

Monday June 17	Showers to cloudy Max: 34C. Min: 21C.
Tuesday June 18	Cloudy to overcast, shower Max: 33C. Min: 20C.

Wednesday June 19	Overcast, shower Max: 30C. Min: 18C.
Thursday June 20	Overcast to cloudy Max: 31C. Min: 20C.

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**Music****Female Rock Revolution**

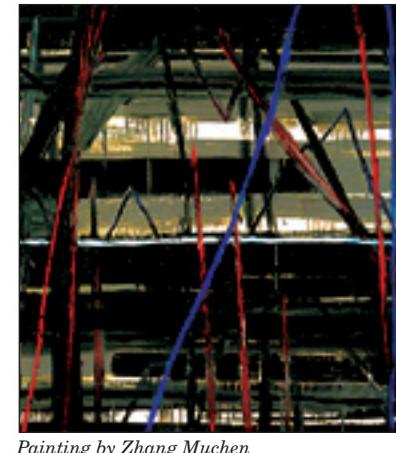
Female bands: Wild Strawberry, Judgment, Happy Avenue, Evil Flower, Wednesday Journey, What, Forest, Triple Square (Japan) and guest band Zhao. **Where:** Get Lucky Bar, east of the south gate of University of International Business & Economics (Duiwei Jingmao). **When:** June 22, 9:30 pm. **Admission:** 20 yuan (male), 30 yuan (female). **Tel:** 6429-9109, 6420-4249.

**Music at Get Lucky**

Punk Music Festival, when: June 14. Spring & Autumn, AK47, Heavy metal

**Exhibitions****Modern Arts Academic Invitation Exhibition**

Two hundred square meters of exhibition area. More than 30 works by five artists, Zheng Xuewu, Xiao Hong, Zhang Cheng, Feng Feng and Li Mingming. Those works reflect the multiple states of life and unique fascination of Chinese modern art. **Where:** Qin Gallery, 1-1-E, Huawei, north of Beijing Curio City, Chaoyang District. **When:** June 15-June 8. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 8779-0461. **E-mail:** qingallery@yahoo.com



Painting by Zhang Muchen

**Flowing Scenery—Zhang Muchen Oil Painting Exhibition**

Where: Hanmo Arts Gallery, affiliated Middle School of the Machinery Institute, Sanlitun Beili, Chaoyang District. **When:** June 15-30, 1pm-8pm, Tue-Fri; 10am-8pm, Sat & Sun. Opening party: June 15, 3-7pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 6416-6254. **E-mail:** hanmo@guaweb.com

**Oil Painting Exhibition**

By students from Capital Normal University. **Where:** International Art Gallery, 48 Wangfujing Dajie. **When:** June 14-19, 9am-6pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 6513-3388 ext. 1207/8.

**Summer Activities****Summer Learning & Fun**

For kids in grades 4 to 8

**Four projects:** Super camp, June 27-July 3, July 25-31, 7-day program from 9am to 5pm, for students 9-14-year-old. Incorporates proven, cutting-edge learning methods that help students succeed through mastery of academic, social, and everyday skills.

Intensive English, July 4-8, 11-15, 9am-5pm, for students from 9 to 14. Games, music, role-play and other interactive activities.

Super learning for students and families, July 15, 20 for 1-day program, July 16-17 and July 18-19 for 2-day program, 9am-5pm.

Memory expert Scott Bornstein will offer two differ-



Summer Learning &amp; Fun

**Newly Opened Bars & Restaurants****Nuage—Vietnamese Restaurant**

Owned by Bai Feng, the owner of the No Name Bar beside the Yinding Bridge, this restaurant is situated just behind the bar. The deco is quite special and it's a bit pricey. **Tel:** 6401-0541.

**Rumba Latina**

A new Latin bar at Capital Garden, with 6-piece Colombian band performing from 9:30pm to 2:30am every night except Mondays. Large dancing area, the hottest and most popular Latin music and friendly service. No entrance tickets

required. **Add:** east gate of Worker's Stadium, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 6508-5850, 6508-5852

**Latinos—Beijing New Salsa Club**

Live music every night, Colombian, Xinjiang or Flamenco bands. Latin DJs, dancers & teachers, and dance lessons on Sundays. **Add:** south gate of Chaoyang Park, beside Big East. **Tel:** 6507-9898.

**Pink Loft**

Add: 2 Sanlitun Nanlu, Qipejie, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 11:30am-2:30pm, 9pm-2:30pm. **Tel:** 6506-8811.

June 16. **Difficulty:** 3. **Walking time:** three hours. **Pick up:** 8:30am at the Lido outside Starbucks, 9am at the Capital Paradise main gate. **Return:** 4-5pm. **Route:** An a to b hike. Start from a little village, pass the trout farms at the back of Mutianyu Great Wall. Hike on country trails over a pass or two, through a few sweet little villages, to the other side. The trail is filled with birds, wild flowers, lush bushes and trees. Springs and streams make it quite popular. It is called the "Wangfujing Street of the mountains". **How to join:** mail to bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

**Sign up for Senior Citizens Singing Competition**

Beijing Musician Association will hold the Beijing Senior Citizens Singing Competition. The deadline for participation is June 30. **When:** till June 30. **Add:** Beijing Cultural Bureau. **Tel:** 6604-4739.

rock night, when: June 15. Metal music and rap night, when: June 22. **Where:** Get Lucky Bar. **Admission:** 20, 30 yuan. **Tel:** 6429-9109.

**Folk Music**

Beijing Concert Hall will hold a series of folk music performances starting January next year. Many folk artists will come to Beijing to present their local styles, from various places such as Yunnan, Xinjiang, Tibet, Shaanxi, Qinghai and Inner Mongolia. **When:** January 1 to October 1, 2003. **Add:** 1 Xinhua Jie, Liubukou, west Chang'an Avenue. **Tel:** 6605-7006.

**Movies**

Xiao Wu directed by Jia Zhangke

**Introduction to My Camera Never Lies & Meeting with Author and Directors**

*My Camera Never Lies* - Pioneer Film People Archives (1961-1970), the first book about pioneers in film; photos from "Devils at the Doorstep" directed by Jiang Wen; the original script of "The Story of Winter & Spring" by Wang Xiaoshuai; and autographs of Jia Zhangke, Jiang Wen, Wang Xiaoshuai, Zhang Ming, Lou Hua, Zhang Yuan, Lu Xuechang and others. **Plan:** screen movie *Xiao Wu* or *Platform* (*Zhan Tai*) directed by Jia Zhangke; speech by a representative of Books Publishing and Distributing Co.; speech by the author Cheng Qingsong (to be decided); speech by directors Jia Zhangke, Zhang Ming and Wang Chao (both to be confirmed); author signings and 30% discount on books. **Where:** New Media Art Space, The Loft, 4 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District. **When:** June 22, 2pm. **Tel:** 6501-7501.

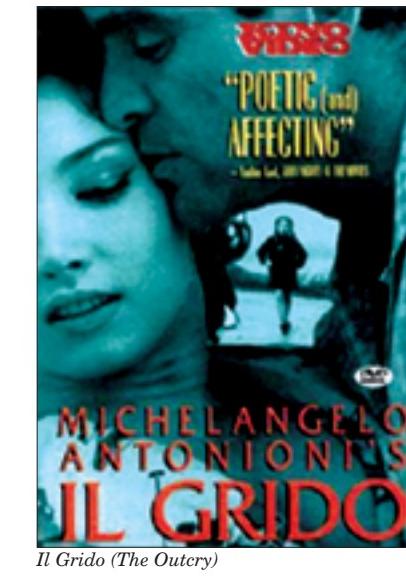
**The Making of the Atomic Bomb (Heng Kong Chu Shi)**

Directed by Chen Guoxing, starring Li Youbin, 1999, 115 minutes. This is a true, dramatized story of a small troupe of scientists and soldiers that was sent on a top-secret mission to the Gobi Desert in 1958. There is an authentic 1950's China feel to this film. All of the historical details surrounding the making of the bomb are highlighted and personified, including China's stormy relationship with the Soviet Union. **Where:** Cherry Lane Movies, Sino-Japanese Youth Exchange Center, 40 Liangmaiqiao. **When:** June 21, 8pm. **Admission:** 50 yuan. **Tel:** 6461-5318/9.

**Il Grido (The Outcry)**

Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, 1957, Italian with English subtitles. A wonderful if disturbing film

about alienation and modern society. The great though relatively forgotten American actor Steve Cochran is near perfect as the refinery mechanic who finds he can't communicate with those he loves, and so begins a downward spiral towards a state of mental disintegration. Antonioni directs with a sure hand a picture of a successful, postwar, industrial Italy where everything is not as easy as it seems. **Where:** Cultural Office of the Italian Embassy, 2 Sanlitun Dongjiedai, Chaoyang District. **When:** June 20, 7pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 6532-2187.

**Thursday Movies**

One night double features. One is a Chinese movie with English subtitles, and the other is a big English movie. *Lupine* 1989 (Taiwan Movie), directed by Yang Liguo, starring Huang Kunxuan, Li Shuzhen. **Where:** 3 Xinzhongjie, Dongzhimenwai Dajie, bus 24, 44, 106, 123 to Dongzhimen. **When:** June 20, 8:30pm. **Admission:** 30 yuan. **Tel:** 6415-7322, 6416-9253.

**Breathless (A Bout de Souffle) -Film Noir**

Directed by Jean-Luc Godard, starring Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean Seberg, 1959. It captures perfectly the post-war zeitgeist in France, indeed much of Western Europe. **Where:** Space for Imagination Coffee Shop, 5 Xiwangzhuang Xiaoqu, opposite the east gate of Qinghua University. **When:** June 15, 7pm. **Tel:** 6279-1280.

**Trips****Horseback Riding in Inner Mongolia**

**Plan:** 11:30 pick-up at Gongti Beimen. July 16, arrive at hotel and have breakfast. Morning at a lake, relax after the busride. After lunch, go horse riding. Then return to the hotel and have dinner. Fire party starts with music, a whole roasted lamb and perhaps beer. July 7, rise early and return to Beijing via Chengde. Arrive in Beijing before 11pm. **When:** July 5-7. **Fee:** 850 yuan, including transport by air-conditioned bus, hotel accommodation in 2-person room (1 person room extra 100 yuan), all meals, whole roast lamb BBQ, all beers and soft drinks during the whole weekend and all entrance fees to National parks. Excluded is the horseback riding itself, which costs around 30 yuan per hour. **How to join:** mail to piet@yphh.com with names of participants and address and mobile number.

**YPHH Trip to DPRK—Places still available**

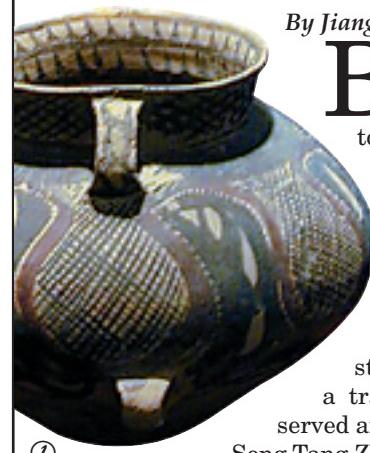
A trip to North Korea. This June

there will be the Mass Games. The games are normally reserved for visiting foreign leaders but the Arirang Mass Games are being specifically aimed at tourists. **When:** June 22-25. **Fee:** approximately \$990 all inclusive (flights, meals, accommodation, guides, transport) from Beijing for a four day tour. For more information, check www.yphh.com/html/events.php?eventid=3

**Sports & Beauty****Beauty Talk—Summer Skin Care**

Professional beauty consultant Sylvia Tam from Vogue Beauty will give a talk including an interactive discussion on tips for taking care of skin this summer. In English and Mandarin. Limited seating available, please reserve before June 24. **Where:** Evolution Fitness, Dabeiyao. **When:** June 26, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30 yuan. **Tel:** 6567-0266, 6567-4743.

**Lecture****English Studying Lecture**



By Jiang Zhong

**B**eijing is home to many outstanding state-run museums that house troves of amazing cultural and historical relics. Under their shadow, the numerous privately run museums in the city present other pictures of China's rich history.

#### Folk carvings as historical records

Three hundred *men dun* (two stone carvings guarding the door to a traditional courtyard house) are preserved and displayed at Li Wei's museum, the Song Tang Zhai (Bamboo Hall), at Liulichang.

① Carvings of deer, bees and monkeys in *men dun* stand for political promotion, showing the old owner of the courtyard house was a court official," said Li.

Li has collected many other kinds of folk carvings for his museum, including a screen carved with texts praising morality made in 1821 and another carved with the rules for managing a family made in 1736.

Born in 1949, Li spent nine years in Inner Mongolia during the Cultural Revolution. After returning to Beijing in 1980, he began collecting stamps. From trading valuable Cultural Revolution stamps, he quickly became wealthy.

He gave up stamp collecting in 1988 and took up collecting old folk carvings.

As a boy, he lived in Dongcheng District (the eastern part of downtown Beijing). "Old Beijingers always said that the rich lived in the east and the officials in the west," he said.

Next door to Li's home was the former residence of a top scholar of the Qing Dynasty. Li said, "The descendants of the scholar had all moved out, leaving the old residences vacant for years." It became a favorite play spot for him.

"I'd climb over the wall and spend the whole day in the old houses. The wall collapsed one day to reveal twenty vessels they had raised crickets in," he added.

Cricket fighting was very popular among rich families in imperial China.

Li Said, "The scholar worried that his children

and grandchildren would indulge in such games and neglect their studying, so he cut a hole in the wall, put the vessels in the hole and cemented over it. I don't know whether what he did worked, but I've always wondered why he didn't simply destroy the vessels."

Li liked to imagine the lives of the people who used to live in the houses in the old residence. "I created a story for every brick in the old houses. I also created a whole world in my mind in which I played with the children of the family."

During the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards destroyed historical relics throughout the country. Li witnessed one rampage in the home of another neighbor. He said, "The family are descendants of the Empress Dowager Cixi. They all knelt on the ground while the Red Guards destroyed thousands of ancient family heirlooms and other relics. They kept silent until one boy grabbed a jade vase, at which point they cried out, telling him the vase was given to the family by the Emperor Qianlong and they had decided to turn it over to the government. He destroyed it anyway."

According to Li, "The Red Guards not only destroyed porcelain jars, paintings and jade decorations, but also the continuity of history and people's dignity."

Experiences from his youth sparked Li's interest in antiques. He said, "I collect folk carvings because they reflect changes in society and people's hopes for the future."

Where is Li's museum (Song Tang Zhai 松堂斋): 14, Liulichang Dongjie (琉璃厂东街), Xuanwu District Open: year-round, closed on Mondays Admission: 20 yuan Contact: 67616457

#### Touching fragments of civilization

Fragments of ancient pottery are the stars of the museum run by Bai Ming, called the Mu Ming Tang Ancient Porcelain Fragments Museum

"I have never refused intact historical relics, but history has left us with far more in pieces." Through Bai's trained eye, the fragments have volumes to share about China's history.

Bai's grandfather had a large collection of priceless porcelain pieces, but most were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. "I sold the rest cheap to buy pop tapes in the early 1980s," added Bai. Later, when he was told the true value of the antiques he had sold, he tried to buy them back.

Most of the antiques he bought were proven to be fake. "I have learned a great deal about how to distinguish between real and fake antiques after getting burned many times," he said.

Bai now has 50,000 porcelain fragments in the collection in his museum.

Where is Bai's museum (Mu Ming Tang Ancient Porcelain Fragments Museum): No. 1, Dongqu (东区), Dong Hua Shi Bei Li (东花市北里), Chongwen District Admission: 5 yuan Open: 10am-5pm, 7pm-9pm Contact: 67186939



#### Private museums in Beijing offer fascinating views of fragments of history...

#### Cultural Tour



## Private Collectors Share Treasures

#### The scent of red sandalwood

Chen Lihua, owner of the China Red Sandalwood Art Museum (中国紫檀艺术博物馆), is fascinated by the history and splendor of old red sandalwood artwork.

Born to a family of Qing Dynasty noble heritage, Chen inherited a good deal of her collection of red sandalwood furniture from her ancestors.

"Red sandalwood was regarded as the most precious type of wood by the ancient emperors of China. Few places in China produce red sandalwood, so the emperors had to buy the lumber from the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia," she said.

Chen's devoted interest in objects crafted from the material started at a young age. She said, "I was fascinated by my mother's red sandalwood powder box when I was 5. My dream then was to collect all kinds of red sandalwood powder boxes."

Chen's museum represents twenty years of labor and love. "I spent ten years collecting red sandalwood, and another ten years making artwork with the wood," she added.

Chen spent most of those first ten years in rain forests in Southeast Asia, years that have left a



By Jiang Zhong

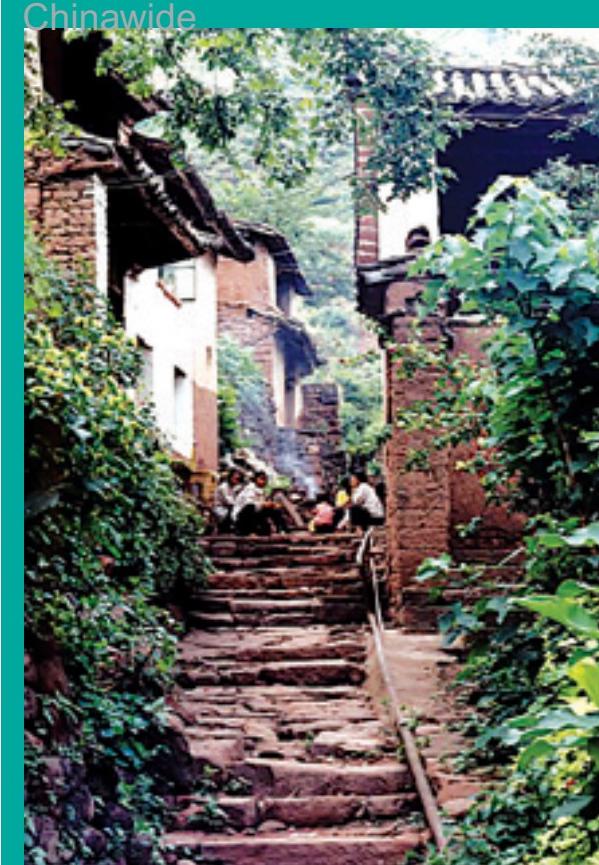
In imperial China, salt was a vital good, its distribution and trade nominally controlled through a government monopoly, and a source of fabulous wealth. Hejing (黑井), a village of 2,000, was once the salt capital of Yunnan Province. It contributed 64% of the province's salt taxes during the Ming Dynasty.

Salt dealers in Hejing were called *zuo hu*. They owned brine wells and salt processing workshops. Through lucrative state subsidies and government purchases, salt dealers had luxurious lives. However, many also sold salt through illegal channels, which brought them great fortunes.

In the 1940s, there were around 80 salt dealers in Hejing. They spent lavishly on their children to show off their wealth. Their kids usually wore silk clothes decorated with gold or silver accessories. Most were sent to schools in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province.

Zhang Ruizhen, 60, daughter of a Hejing salt dealer, spent her school years in Kunming. Her school was destroyed by Japanese bombs in 1930, after which she was sent back to her parents in Hejing.

#### Chinawide



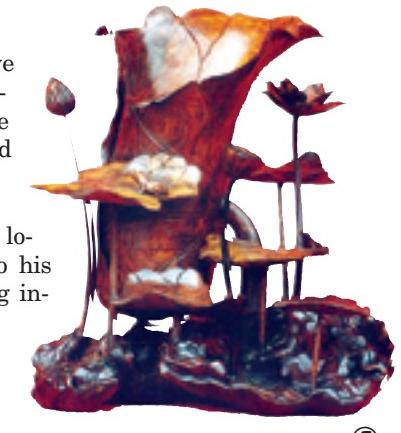
There she witnessed the toil and struggles of the salt workers.

Zhang said, "The workers were paid only enough so they and their family could scrape by. The salt dealers had no respect for them or their work. Workers suspected of stealing salt blocks were forced to work naked."

Streets in Hejing used to be lined with bars and opium dens, which became magnets for salt workers. However, the town was never home to any brothels. In fact, the stone archway standing at the entrance to the village was given a title by the Qing Emperor Qianlong praising the chastity of local women.

Today, Hejing is a quiet get-away, but sixty years ago, it was a bustling town.

According to Zhang, "Horse caravans threaded their way through the crowds. Red seals were stamped on the horses' bodies by soldiers guarding the entrance to the village in order to monitor the volume of salt each dealer transported out of the village."



deep impression on her. "Once we were attacked by poisonous hornets, so we locked ourselves in the jeep. Some hornets still squeezed into the cab and stung one of my companions in the face. His face quickly began to swell, but on a local's advice, we applied urine to his skin, which kept him from being infected," she said.

Once her materials were ready, she began to search out skillful artisans from throughout the country to turn the wood into art.

She said, "The artisans made mistakes sometimes, and each time I destroyed the defective product with an ax in front of them. I didn't like doing it, but I wanted to make no compromises in the quality of the works."

Most of the pieces in the museum are models of buildings in the Forbidden City.

Major exhibits include a model of the emperor's throne and a three-dimensional model of the painting, "Riverside Scene During the Qingming Festival."

Where is the Red Sandalwood museum: 9, Xing Long Xi Jie (兴隆西街), Chaoyang District Getting there: subway to Sihui Donglu (四惠东路), walk eastward for ten minutes Admission: 20 yuan Open: 9am-5:30pm (closed on Monday)

#### Touring the three museums

The folk carving museum and the porcelain fragment museum are not far from each other, and can be covered in one morning. A visit to the Red Sandalwood museum can easily fill an afternoon.

#### Other private museums recommended in Beijing

##### Ancient Pottery Civilization Museum

Ancient pottery and the owner's works are on display.

Where: 12, Nancaiyuan Xi-jie (南菜园西街), Xuanwu District (at the north entrance to Da-guanyuan) Admission: 20 yuan Open: 10am-5pm, closed on Monday Contact: 63538811

##### He Yang and Wu Qian Modern Painting Museum

Works of the two artists are on display.

Where: Changdian Village (广甸村), Jinzhuan County (金盏乡), Chaoyang District Getting there: bus 418 from Dongzhimen to the Tulip Garden Admission: 5 yuan Open: 8am-4pm, closed on Monday Contact: 84312537

##### Guan Fu Classic Art Museum

Ancient porcelain works and antique furniture are on display.

Where: Huazhi Building (华智大厦), Zhugan Hutong (竹竿胡同), Nan Xiaojie (南小街), Chaoyangmennei Getting there: subway to Chaoyangmen Admission: 20 yuan Open: 9am-5pm Contact: 65263208

#### ① ② ③ Vessels from the Ancient Pottery Civilization Museum

#### ④ ⑤ ⑥ Porcelain fragments from the Mu Ming Tang Ancient Porcelain Fragments Museum

#### ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ Red sandalwood artwork



Photos by Li Shu Zhan

## Where Salt Was Like Gold

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